

**RECLAIMING THE TWO BOOKS OF GOD:**

**RESTORING MORAL SANITY**

**TO THE CHURCH**

**A THESIS**

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# CONTENTS

DEDICATION . . . . .	iii
ABSTRACT . . . . .	iv
PROLOGUE. BETRAYING THE TRUTH . . . . .	1
CHAPTER 1. MONKEY BUSINESS . . . . .	8
CHAPTER 2. THE GREAT DECEPTION. . . . .	24
The Uninspired Inspired Bible . . . . .	25
Evolution Plus God . . . . .	31
Converging Forces . . . . .	35
The Upper Story . . . . .	38
CHAPTER 3. THE TRUTH SUPPRESSED . . . . .	42
The Facts of Evolution . . . . .	43
The Philosophical Basis of Evolution . . . . .	49
Bias in the Scientific Community . . . . .	53
CHAPTER 4. THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE . . . . .	59
The Extent of Inspiration and Authority . . . . .	60
Science in the Bible . . . . .	67
The Compatibility of Science and the Bible . . . . .	73
CHAPTER 5. THE FAITH OF HUMANISM . . . . .	84
Falling Away . . . . .	85
Coming Out . . . . .	88
The Modernist Meltdown . . . . .	91
A New Religion . . . . .	95
Moral Anarchy . . . . .	98
Too Little, Too Late . . . . .	100
EPILOGUE. TRUTH MATTERS . . . . .	105
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	112
VITA . . . . .	123

*To my wife, Karie, whose passion and love for Jesus Christ  
have inspired me to be a better husband,  
father, pastor, and friend.*

## RECLAIMING THE TWO BOOKS OF GOD: RESTORING MORAL SANITY TO THE CHURCH

### Abstract

The first verse in the Bible states, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1, NIV). If this statement is true, then both science and Scripture reveal God to us. His attributes of love, goodness, reason, and logic are reflected in both.

But if there is no God and evolution is true, then neither nature nor the Bible has anything authoritative to say to us about life. The Bible becomes "just another book," and nature the by-product of mindless, purposeless chance. Man becomes an accident and "might makes right." Despite two world wars, Hitler's atrocities, the abortion holocaust, and the continuing slide towards infanticide and euthanasia, this connection between man's cruelty to man and scientific naturalism has gone largely unnoticed.

In 1925, the contrast between the supernatural and Darwinism was exposed for the world to see at the Scopes Trial in Dayton, Tennessee. After the trial it became fashionable to ridicule biblical Christianity in the media. Belief in the Bible was scorned. Evolution was preached. Man was elevated to the place of God. And morality became humanistic. Many asserted that this was a conflict between science and religion, but this assessment was not entirely accurate. The actual conflict centered around the rejection of the supernatural not only in nature but also in the Scriptures!

The devastating effects of divorcing God from his divine books is readily apparent today. If moral sanity is to be restored to the church, and thus, the world, it is absolutely imperative that the two books of God be reclaimed. Both are supernatural. Both reveal God's character. And both communicate his will for how we should live.

# PROLOGUE

## BETRAYING THE TRUTH

If you must make a choice between heresy and schism,  
always choose heresy.<sup>1</sup>

– Peter James Lee, Episcopal Bishop

At the heart of the betrayal of biblical Christianity by America's religious elites stands a blatant disregard for truth. Peter James Lee, the Episcopal bishop of Virginia, who voted to approve the appointment of V. Gene Robinson as bishop in 2003, despite being openly homosexual, was dogmatic in his choice for heresy. The American Anglican Council, an organization of conservative Episcopalians that upholds the authority of the Bible, in response to the consecration of Robinson stated, "Heresy has been held up as Holy. Blasphemy has been redefined as blessing. The hope of the transforming love of Jesus Christ has been denied. Holy Scripture has been abandoned and sin celebrated over sanctification."<sup>2</sup> The internet reaction was brisk. "A Midwestern man announced that the election was the 'last straw' and he was leaving the Episcopal Church immediately." "Another called homosexuality 'unnatural and wrong.'" Still

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<sup>1</sup> *World*, 14 February 2004, 16.

<sup>2</sup> James Solheim, "Amid Cheers and Protests, Robinson Consecrated in Diocese of New Hampshire," *Episcopal News Service*, 2 November, 2003, [www.episcopalchurch.org/3577\\_21297\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/3577_21297_ENG_HTML.htm).

another “from Michigan asked, ‘What has this world come to? It’s a pretty sad day in the church.’”<sup>3</sup>

For the minority of laypersons in the mainline churches who still believed in the authority of the Bible, this sentiment was a common reaction. The Episcopal Church (ECUSA) was not the only denomination that was abandoning “Holy Scripture” for the homosexual agenda.<sup>4</sup> This denial was also evident in The United Church of Christ, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church – USA, the American Baptist Churches USA, the Congregationalists, and others. In the United Methodist Church, a jury of 13 clergy members of the Pacific Northwest Conference acquitted Karen Dammann, “a self-avowed practicing homosexual” of “practices declared by the United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teachings.”<sup>5</sup> This despite the fact that The Book of Discipline states that “self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.”<sup>6</sup> The jury members simply disregarded the Book of Discipline in the same way that they disregarded the Bible. “Although we, the trial court, found passages that contain the phrasing ‘incompatible with Christian teaching,’” they wrote in their statement to the court, “we did not find that any of them constitute a declaration.”<sup>7</sup> They

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<sup>3</sup> Jan Nunley and James Solheim, “Mixed Reaction to New Hampshire Bishop Election,” *Episcopal News Service*, 8 June 2003, [www.episcopalchurch.org/3577\\_18285\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/3577_18285_ENG_HTML.htm).

<sup>4</sup> The homosexual agenda consists not only of advocating tolerance for homosexual behavior, but also the acceptance of homosexuality as an inherent, inborn trait and therefore a normal and healthy alternative to heterosexual human sexuality in Lynn Vincent, “Under the Radar,” *World*, 13 May 2006, 23.

<sup>5</sup> “Dammann Trial Verdict,” *United Methodist News Service*, 20 March 2004, [www.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=2&mid=3761](http://www.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=2&mid=3761).

<sup>6</sup> *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* (Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2004), Paragraph 304.3.

<sup>7</sup> “Jury Issues Statement on Decision in Dammann Case,” *United Methodist News Service*, 20 March 2004, [www.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=2&mid=3762](http://www.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=2&mid=3762).

laid aside the binding statements of the Book of Discipline with regard to ordination by declaring them to be non-declarative!

While homosexuality appeared to be the issue that was tearing up the mainline church, the root cause of the schism was the denial of scriptural authority, the seeds of which were planted long ago. In 1969, Jeffrey K. Hadden researched the views of the ministers of the mainline churches and published the results in the book *The Gathering Storm in the Churches*. “The Bible is considered to be the central document that informs Christians of their heritage and faith,” he wrote. “While the literal authenticity of the Bible has long been challenged, its central place in Christian history has not. Therefore, it is appropriate that our analysis of religious beliefs begin with an examination of the minister’s views of the role of the Bible in understanding the Christian faith.” What he discovered was that less than 20% of the Methodist, Episcopalian and Presbyterian clergy agreed with the statement, “I believe in a literal or nearly literal interpretation of the Bible.” Among American Baptists and American Lutherans, 43% of the ministers affirmed that statement. Since “literal” can be easily misconstrued, Hadden posed a series of additional statements to get to the minister’s core views of the Bible. The view that “Adam and Eve were individual historical persons” mirrored the results of the previous statement, with only 3% of Episcopalians affirming the historicity of Adam and Eve. The percentages dropped even further when the ministers were asked to affirm that the “Scriptures are the inspired and inerrant Word of God not only in matters of faith but also in historical, geographical, and other secular matters.” Only one-third of the American Baptists could affirm this statement. The American Lutheran ministers fell to 23%, and the Methodist (13%), Episcopalian (5%) and Presbyterian (12%) clergy overwhelmingly

rejected this position. Correspondingly, the vast majority believed that “an understanding of the language of myth and symbol is as important for interpreting biblical literature as are history and archaeology.” Over 75% of the Methodist, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian ministers affirmed this view, as did 62% of the American Baptists and American Lutherans.<sup>8</sup> The survey demonstrated that the Bible was no longer looked to as a source of authority for most clergy in the mainline churches. Surprisingly, without an authoritative Bible, a slight majority of the clergy still maintained belief in the virgin birth, the physical resurrection of Jesus from the grave, and divine judgment after death, revealing that before cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith are discarded, the authority of Scripture must first be denied.<sup>9</sup> By remaining in their pulpits long after they had rejected historic Christianity, they betrayed their constituents. Instead of leaving to found denominations on some other basis than Christianity, they stayed and undermined the faith they no longer confessed, infecting their congregations in the process.<sup>10</sup>

This work, therefore, seeks to answer the question, “What is going on in the church?” Many mainline churches have abandoned scriptural authority, but why? How did this happen? What did the religious liberals substitute in its place? Chapter one begins to address this question by focusing on the 1925 Scopes-Monkey Trial. This watershed event forced the conflict between orthodox Christianity and Darwinian evolution into the

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<sup>8</sup> Jeffrey K. Hadden, *The Gathering Storm in the Churches* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969), 38-39, 40-45.

<sup>9</sup> Historically, this has been the case in Frank Hugh Foster, *The Modern Movement in American Theology: Sketches in the History of American Protestant Thought from the Civil War to the World War* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1969 [1939]), 157.

<sup>10</sup> Hadden, *The Gathering Storm*, 49-50, 63. Hadden discovered that the beliefs of the laity mirrored the beliefs of the clergy by comparing his study to that of Glock and Stark. However, a direct comparison was not possible because of the difference in the wording of the questions. What is evident is that the “liberal to fundamentalist order of the denominations” holds true for the laity as well as the clergy.



open. The newspapers had a field day as Clarence Darrow in open court mocked William Jennings Bryan and biblical Christianity. The event gave the media a free pass to publicly ridicule orthodox Christianity.

In chapter two, the themes identified in the Scopes Trial are developed. The steps leading up to the abandonment of scriptural authority are explored. The effects of higher criticism and historicism on the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible are traced from Henry Ward Beecher to Harry Emerson Fosdick. The application of the scientific method and naturalistic evolution to the Scriptures is examined. And the new authority, science, is identified. The modernists, in betraying biblical Christianity for naturalistic science, relegated Christianity to the upper room of “faith” and “experience” while science held sway by claiming the ground floor of “reason” and “knowledge.” But naturalism ultimately excluded even the upper room of religion.

The philosophical underpinnings of naturalism were hidden by the declaration that evolution was a fact of science. Chapter three exposes the myth of evolution and traces the observation of “design” in nature from William Paley's “watch” to Michael Behe's “flagellum.” Behe has demonstrated that Darwin’s mechanism of natural selection cannot account for the origin of life through the discovery of irreducibly complex organisms at the microbiological level. The intricate design found in nature cries out for a designer, and for that reason, intelligent design is rejected by the scientific community. God forbid that the designer might actually be God! Scientific naturalism’s a priori commitment to materialism is examined.

In contrast to the religious elites who had sided with the evolutionists, chapter four explores the authority of the fundamentalists – the Bible. If at any point the Bible

contained error, it would cease to be a faithful and true authority and would prove useless to them as a reliable guide to faith. For the fundamentalists, the Bible was true in all that it affirmed, including science and history. They gauged their faith in the Bible on the basis of its unique character: fulfilled prophecy, scientific knowledge that predated modern discoveries, preservation and circulation, its internal claims to inspiration, and the character of God in communicating perfectly his Word. If the Bible was in fact the revelation of a perfect God, then it must be infallible and authoritative in all that it affirmed. Therefore the true facts of science and the Bible rightly understood must be compatible. The chapter concludes with a potential resolution to the problem of cosmology and a literal interpretation of the book of Genesis. Gorman Gray's solution in *The Age of the Universe* removes the obstacles to the veracity of Scripture in reference to the speed of light and other scientific observations.<sup>11</sup> Revelation and Nature, as the two books of God, are shown to be in agreement.

Though modernists continued to deny this truth, they could not live in a world devoid of meaning. Chapter five reviews the logical result of materialism and the modernist response. The humanists rejected Christianity completely, and substituted in its place the religion of human experience. Their honest assessment of their position was too radical for most religious liberals as it demanded a withdrawal from established Christianity and ultimately led to outright atheism and its corresponding immorality. Reinhold Niebuhr, the young minister from Detroit, came to the rescue by calling the modernists back to the concepts of sin, repentance and hope that can only be found in the

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<sup>11</sup> Gorman Gray, *The Age of the Universe: What are the Biblical Limits* (Washougal, WA: Morning Star, 2000), 89.

absolute standards of theism. But instead of returning to the absolute authority of the Bible, Niebuhr continued to espouse the modernist view of a mythical revelation.<sup>12</sup> Sitting in judgment of Scripture, he led the vast majority of America's mainline clergy down the road of neo-orthodoxy. Using the terminology of historic Christianity, but importing new meaning to the terms, Niebuhr and the neo-orthodox ministers misled the members of the churches. Ironically, "as doubt about the validity of Christian beliefs emerges, commitment to ritual participation in religious institutions declines," Hadden observed. "In other words, with doubt comes a rejection of the church's authority to demand regular participation in the life of the church."<sup>13</sup>

By rejecting the authority of the Bible, the religious elites sought to maintain their influence. By adopting the authority of the scientific method, they thought that they were on the front end of a movement to improve the world. But instead of elevating man, they contributed to his fall. By rejecting the two books of God, they severed morality from the source of absolute truth and led the way down the moral abyss. This is their story.

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<sup>12</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, *Reflections on the End of an Era* (New York: Scribner's, 1934), 287-290.

<sup>13</sup> Hadden, *The Gathering Storm*, 66. "The Gallup data show that church attendance is highest in the theologically conservative denominations and lowest in those denominations where rejection of orthodox theology is the greatest."

# ONE

## MONKEY BUSINESS

Mr. Bryan – Your honor, I think I can shorten this testimony. The only purpose Mr. Darrow has is to slur at the Bible, but I will answer his question. . . . I want the world to know that this man, who does not believe in a God, is trying to use a court in Tennessee –

Mr. Darrow – I object to that.

Mr. Bryan – (continuing) to slur at it, and while it will take time, I am willing to take it.

Mr. Darrow – I object to your statement. I am exempting you on your fool ideas that no intelligent Christian on earth believes.

The Court – Court is adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.<sup>1</sup>

– Court Transcript

Monday, July 20, 1925 was another hot, muggy day in Dayton. The prosecution's case against John Thomas Scopes, the substitute biology teacher accused of violating the recently enacted anti-evolution law in Tennessee, could not have been going any better. Every attempt by Clarence Darrow, the infamous agnostic defense attorney, to put the Bible on trial had failed. Earlier that morning, Darrow was humbled by having to

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<sup>1</sup> *The World's Most Famous Court Trial, State of Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes; Complete Stenographic Report of the Court Test of the Tennessee Anti-Evolution Act at Dayton, July 10 to 21, 1925, Including Speeches and Arguments of Attorneys*, ed. Leonard W. Levy (New York: Da Capo Press, 1971 [c1925]), 304.

apologize for sarcastic comments that led to contempt of court charges. Judge John T. Raulston magnanimously forgave Darrow citing the example of Jesus Christ. Having contained the incorrigible Darrow, the trial was all but over.

The symbolism of the afternoon's proceedings, however, were deeply prophetic. Out of fear that the courthouse floor could not sustain the weight of the crowd, the trial was moved to the courthouse lawn. The jury, which had been absent for most of the preceding six days was finally going to hear the case. But before the jury could be brought in, Darrow raised yet another objection.

Mr. Darrow – Your honor, before you send for the jury, I think it my duty to make this motion. Off to the left of where the jury sits a little bit and about ten feet in front of them is a large sign about ten feet long reading, “Read Your Bible,” and a hand pointing to it. The word “Bible” is in large letters, perhaps a foot and a half long, and the printing –

The Court – Hardly that long I think, general.

Mr. Darrow – What is that?

The Court – Hardly that long.

Mr. Darrow – Why, we will call it a foot. . . .

Mr. Darrow – I move that it be removed.

The Court – Yes.

Gen. McKenzie - If your honor please, why should it be removed? It is their defense and stated before the court, that they do not deny the Bible, that they expected to introduce proof to make it harmonize. Why should we remove the sign cautioning the people to read the Word of God just to satisfy the others in this case?<sup>2</sup>

By “calling attention to the flaming instructions” of the sign to “Read your Bible daily”

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 280-281.

and then requesting to have it removed, Darrow would accomplish visually what he had not been able to do verbally.<sup>3</sup> “Discussion was long and heated. The sign was removed. Tennessee farmers were shocked.”<sup>4</sup> The removal of the sign electrified the crowd. The trap for William Jennings Bryan had been set!

The defense had been arguing all along that there was “no conflict between evolution and Christianity.” They denied that they were “part of any movement or conspiracy on the part of scientists to destroy the authority of Christianity or the Bible.” And yet they admitted that “there is a direct conflict between the theory of evolution and the theories of creation as set forth in the Book of Genesis.” Defense attorney Dudley Malone speculated that “science occupies a field of learning separate and apart from the learning of theology which the clergy expound.” For the defense, the Bible was nothing more than a “work of religious aspiration and rules of conduct which must be kept in the field of theology.”<sup>5</sup> This admission was telling. Instead of viewing the Bible as the inspired Word of God, it had been reduced to the byproduct of man’s religious feelings and desires.

The defense had expert witnesses on hand such as Kirtley F. Mather and Shailer Mathews from the fields of science and theology respectively to buttress their case that Christianity was compatible with evolution, but they were afraid to let these witnesses be cross-examined by Bryan. Arthur Hays admitted that “cross-examination would have shown that the scientists, while religious men - for we chose only that kind - still did not believe in the Virgin birth and other miracles.” Hays confided, “It was felt by us that if

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<sup>3</sup> Clarence Darrow, *The Story of My Life* (New York: Scribner, 1932), 265.

<sup>4</sup> Arthur Garfield Hays, *Let Freedom Ring* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972 [c1937]), 70.

<sup>5</sup> *Complete Stenographic Report*, 113, 115, 116.

the cause of free education was ever to be won, it would need the support of millions of intelligent churchgoing people who didn't question theological miracles."<sup>6</sup> In order to advance their cause of education free from the constraints of the Bible, they needed to withhold from the average church member the true beliefs and thoughts of the religious elites<sup>7</sup> concerning the Bible. The Unitarian minister, Charles Francis Potter, however, refused to testify on behalf of the defense. He would rather "take ten of the hundred reasons for doubting the Bible's literal truth and drop them from the airplanes if necessary in cities of the South" than to hide his stance that the Bible and evolution were incompatible.<sup>8</sup>

This, in essence, was the core issue of the trial, and everyone knew it. John W. Butler, who authored the anti-evolution legislation in the House of Representatives, said, "If we are to exist as a nation the principles upon which our Government is founded must not be destroyed, which they surely would be if . . . we set the Bible aside as being untrue and put evolution in its place."<sup>9</sup> The famous playwright and short story writer, Jack Lait, interviewed the "typical citizens" of Memphis the day before the trial began. He observed that "Evolution is on trial; but science is not. Evolution is not science. In fact it is the very opposite of it." He reported that "Evolution is a religion – a sacrilegious religion, but

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<sup>6</sup> Hays, *Let Freedom Ring*, 67.

<sup>7</sup> The term "religious elites" includes theological modernists and liberals and is used to reflect their alleged superiority in education and their application of "scientific" and philosophical methods for deconstructing the Bible and rejecting historic Christianity. While the terms "modernists" and "liberals" were often used interchangeably, not all modernists were religious. A modernist generally believed in science and the progress of man, with liberalism supplying a theological perspective. Protestants who rejected orthodox Christianity were called both modernists and liberals.

<sup>8</sup> "Bible and Evolution Conflict, Says Potter," *Chattanooga Times*, 2 July 1925, 2, quoted in Edward J. Larson, *Summer for the Gods: the Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 117.

<sup>9</sup> "Dayton's 'Amazing' Trial," *The Literary Digest* 86 (25 July 1925): 7, quoted in Larson, *Summer for the Gods*, 49-50.

nevertheless a religion, because it deals with origin and origins, by their very nature, imply an act of God or something which must dispute and displace God.” And finally, he concluded that “Evolution cannot be mixed with the Biblical concept of creation. There must be a definite choice between the two.”<sup>10</sup>

Hays saw it as “a battle between two definite types of mind – the rigid, orthodox, unyielding, narrow, conventional mind and the broad, liberal, critical, cynical, and tolerant mind.”<sup>11</sup> Fortunately, Hays gave us a glimpse of how an open and tolerant mind works. “At the entrance to the building was a large sign ‘Read your Bible daily for one week.’” He confessed, “I never passed that sign without mentally transposing the words, ‘Read your Bible weakly for one day.’”<sup>12</sup>

Darrow was even more hostile. “My object, and my only object, was to focus the attention of the country on the programme of Mr. Bryan and the other fundamentalists in America,” he said. “Mr. Bryan was the logical man to prosecute the case. . . . He represented religion, and in this he was the idol of all Morondom.”<sup>13</sup> Darrow had a naïve caricature of biblical Christianity.<sup>14</sup> He thought that since the schools in Tennessee and Mississippi “were teaching that the earth was round instead of flat, and the day and night

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<sup>10</sup> Jack Lait, “Science Not on Trial at Dayton,” *Birmingham News*, 9 July 1925, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Arthur Garfield Hays, *City Lawyer; the Autobiography of a Law Practice* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1942), 213.

<sup>12</sup> Hays, *Let Freedom Ring*, 34.

<sup>13</sup> Darrow, *The Story of My Life*, 249.

<sup>14</sup> The term “biblical Christianity” is used to describe those who held to the historic doctrines of Protestant Christianity on the basis of an inspired, inerrant, infallible Bible. They employed a literal interpretation of the Bible, which meant understanding the Bible in its context through the normal application of language, figures of speech, and literary genres. This practice was often caricatured by liberals as “literalism” – a fabricated wooden approach to language that denied literary constructions such as phenomenological language and figures of speech in an effort to mock, disparage, and discredit those who believed that the Bible was the literal Word of God. If the Bible said that the “sun stood still” or that Jesus was a “vine,” liberals claimed that literalism demanded that these phrases be interpreted to mean that the sun actually stood still or that Jesus was an actual vine.



were due to the revolution of the earth on its axis and not from the sun and moon going around it, or being drawn across the horizon” that this was proof that the schools were already teaching things that are “flatly contrary to Genesis” and which “refute the Bible account much more clearly” than “the doctrine of evolution.”<sup>15</sup> However, the book of Genesis does not state that the earth is flat or that the sun revolves around the earth.<sup>16</sup> Darrow was quick to identify those who believe in biblical Christianity as “mostly the illiterate,”<sup>17</sup> but his words revealed an understanding that seems shallow.

As always, it does not help matters when those who are alleged to be believers in Christianity aid and abet the opposition and betray the truth. Shailer Mathews, dean of the Divinity School at the University of Chicago, led the rampage. Drawing heavily on theories of higher criticism,<sup>18</sup> Mathews took to the press to articulate the modern critical constructs that have undermined so much of biblical Christianity. In a story printed in the *Birmingham News* on the opening day of the trial, he wrote, “The writers of the Bible used the language, conceptions and science of the times in which they lived. We trust and follow their religious insight with no need of accepting their views on nature.” He heightened his betrayal of orthodoxy by concluding, “We have to live in the universe science gives us. A theology that is contrary to reality must be abandoned or improved.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Darrow, *The Story of My Life*, 247.

<sup>16</sup> A reading of the book of Genesis reveals that Darrow was mistaken.

<sup>17</sup> Darrow, *The Story of My Life*, 268.

<sup>18</sup> Higher criticism is the highly subjective process of determining the authorship and dating of the books of the Bible through alleged source documentation derived from stylistic differences in the text. The theories and hypotheses, though speculative and contradictory in nature, undermined the historic doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible.

<sup>19</sup> Shailer Mathews, “Bible Does Not Oppose Evolution,” *Birmingham News*, 10 July 1925, 10.

William Jennings Bryan sensed that this was exactly the path that faith in evolution would lead one down. Speaking of evolutionists, Bryan wrote:

They first discard the Mosaic account of man's creation, and they do it on the ground that there are no miracles. This in itself constitutes a practical repudiation of the Bible; the miracles of the Old and New Testament cannot be cut out without a mutilation that is equivalent to rejection. They reject the supernatural along with the miracle, and with the supernatural the inspiration of the Bible and the authority that rests upon inspiration. If these believers in evolution are consistent and have the courage to carry their doctrine to its logical conclusion, they reject the virgin birth of Christ and the resurrection.<sup>20</sup>

Many of the religious elites were quick to abandon scriptural authority for scientific assumptions. So confident were they in the new age of science, that they willingly surrendered the realm of nature to the theorists. Addressing a Baptist convention in Memphis in 1925, the Reverend R. T. Vann opined, "Now, granted that we may and must teach science in our colleges, this teaching must be done by scientists. . . . Neither priest nor prophet nor apostle, nor even the Lord Himself, ever made the slightest contribution to our knowledge of natural science."<sup>21</sup>

At one of the large State universities the college president made the point in a speech that "religion must not be thought of as something that is inconsistent with reasonable, scientific thinking in regard to the nature of the universe." Now no "Bible-believing Christian"<sup>22</sup> would refute this. For true science and the Bible rightly understood will never be incompatible. There can be no conflict for "all truth is God's truth."<sup>23</sup> But

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<sup>20</sup> William Jennings Bryan, *In His Image* (New York: Revell, 1922), 118.

<sup>21</sup> "Baptist for Science in Church Colleges," *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 5 February 1925, 5, quoted in Larson, *Summer for the Gods*, 52.

<sup>22</sup> "Bible-believing Christian" was a self-appointed moniker for those who believed in the Bible as the inspired, inerrant, authoritative Word of God in contrast to the liberals who were "Christian" in name only.

<sup>23</sup> The Puritans argued that God revealed himself in two books: the Bible and Nature, and that these two books were compatible.

the president continued, “I go so far to say that, if you cannot reconcile religion with the things taught in biology, in psychology, or in other fields of study in this university, then you should throw your religion away.”<sup>24</sup>

Malone, in classic courtroom mockery, threw down the gauntlet to those who upheld the inspiration of the Bible:

But these gentlemen say the Bible contains the truth – if the world of science can produce any truth or facts not in the Bible as we understand it then destroy science but “keep our Bible.” And we say “keep your Bible.” Keep it as your consolation, keep it as your guide, but keep it where it belongs, in the world of your own conscience, in the world of your individual judgment, in the world of the Protestant conscience that I heard so much about when I was a boy, keep your Bible in the world of theology where it belongs and do not try to tell an intelligent world and the intelligence of this country that these books written by men who knew none of the accepted fundamental facts of science can be put into a course of science, because what are they doing here?<sup>25</sup>

It never dawned on the religious and academic elites that what needed to be discarded was not the inspired Bible of Christianity but rather their faulty view of science and nature, and their misinterpretations of Scripture. The resulting divide could lead to only one outcome – an undermining of biblical Christianity that must be opposed. For Bryan and the anti-evolutionists, this attack upon Christianity constituted a “duel to the death.” Even though “the issue should not engender bitter feelings,” he added “the fight is to the finish because Christianity and evolution can never be reconciled.”<sup>26</sup>

This “fight” was more than just a religious squabble over origins. For Bryan, it constituted a fight for the spiritual and moral fabric of America. “There is a powerful restraining influence in the belief that an all-seeing eye scrutinizes every thought and

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<sup>24</sup> Bryan, *In His Image*, 119.

<sup>25</sup> *Complete Stenographic Report*, 185.

<sup>26</sup> “Bryan Does Not Fear Murderers, Man Can Be Evolutionist And Christian If Not Much Of Either,” *Birmingham News*, 9 July 1925, 2.

word and act of the individual.” To accept the Darwinian theory was to “lose the consciousness of God’s presence in our daily life.” It would be affirming the belief that “no spiritual force has touched the life of man or shaped the destiny of nations.”<sup>27</sup> Quoting from the American preface to *The Glass of Fashion*, Bryan argued, “If Darwinism be true, if accepted as a sufficient cause for all the majesty and glory of physical nature, then there is no crime or violence, however abominable in its circumstances and however cruel in its execution, which cannot be justified by success.” On the flip side, there can be “no act of disinterested love and tenderness, no deed of self-sacrifice and mercy, no aspiration after beauty and excellence, for which a single reason can be adduced by logic.”<sup>28</sup> If nature is all that there is, there can be no God. If there is no God, there can be no right and wrong, no love, no morality, no logic. Man would simply be the result of random, purposeless, material chance free to act in any way that secures his survival.

A year earlier, in 1924, Darrow had used this very argument to keep two rich teenagers from receiving the death penalty. Richard Loeb, 17, and Nathan Leopold, 18, had been indicted for the wanton murder of 14 year old Robert Franks. It was Loeb’s idea to commit “the perfect crime of kidnapping, murder, and ransom.”<sup>29</sup> Ironically, after showing how “it is hardly fair to hang a 19-year old boy for the philosophy that was taught him at the university,”<sup>30</sup> Darrow did not want to talk about it in his life story.<sup>31</sup> But Bryan did. Reading from Darrow’s closing argument from the murder trial, Bryan recited

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<sup>27</sup> William Jennings Bryan, *The Prince of Peace* (New York: Revell, n.d.), 10, 15.

<sup>28</sup> Bryan, *In His Image*, 125.

<sup>29</sup> Darrow, *The Story of My Life*, 226-228.

<sup>30</sup> *Complete Stenographic Report*, 180.

<sup>31</sup> Darrow, *The Story of My Life*, 242.

Darrow: “I will guarantee that you can go down to the University of Chicago today . . . and find over 1,000 volumes of Nietzsche. . . . If this boy is to blame for this, where did he get it? Is there any blame attached because somebody took Nietzsche’s philosophy seriously and fashioned his life on it?”<sup>32</sup>

Bryan was connecting the dots. “I want to show you that Nietzsche did praise Darwin,” he said. “He put him as one of the three great men of his century.” Nietzsche’s “supermen were merely the logical outgrowth of the survival of the fittest” philosophy. “And Nietzsche, himself, became an atheist following that doctrine, and became insane, and his father and mother and uncle were among the people he tried to kill.”<sup>33</sup> Bryan’s point was that the natural outcome of believing in evolution and materialism is moral anarchy, war and brutality.

Darrow understood this and was troubled by it. Thus his reticence to talk about his strategy in the Loeb-Leopold case. The most that he could offer was that “for years” he had been “a fairly close student of psychology.” Since Darrow drank from the same well as Nietzsche, the only practical difference between them was the extent of the gloom that each of them felt. At the end of his memoir, Darrow wrote, “The best we can do is be kindly and helpful toward our friends and fellow passengers who are clinging to the same speck of dirt while we are drifting side by side to our common doom.”<sup>34</sup>

This kindly and helpful attitude towards our fellow passengers, however, must not have included those who believed in biblical Christianity. When Bryan revealed that Nietzsche had become insane, Darrow shot back, “He didn’t make half as many insane as

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<sup>32</sup> *Complete Stenographic Report*, 179.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 182-183.

<sup>34</sup> Darrow, *The Story of My Life*, 242, 423.

Jonathan Edwards, your great theologian.”<sup>35</sup> Comments like these, as inane as they were, no doubt got under Bryan’s skin. Because “the prosecution was not able to round up scientists to speak on their behalf” it was decided that “the prosecution team needed to stick to a narrow legal strategy.”<sup>36</sup> They sought, therefore, to exclude all testimony regarding evolution. With the trial well in hand that second weekend, the *New York Times* reported that Bryan personally would have liked to hear the expert testimony.<sup>37</sup> The *Memphis Commercial Appeal* had Darrow’s response in the next day’s edition, “Bryan is willing to express his opinions on science and religion where his statements will not be questioned but Bryan has not dared to test his views in open court under oath.”<sup>38</sup>

“For days Darrow and Malone and Hays had debated whether or not Bryan would take the stand if they should call him as an expert witness on the Bible, ostensibly to show Judge Raulston that the Bible was not a scientific book.”<sup>39</sup> Would Bryan take the bait? What had thus far been a tight, legal case would soon turn into the circus Darrow had hoped for.<sup>40</sup> If only Bryan had remained in his chair, the defense would have had no choice but to rest on the seventh day.

Having brought down the sign, “Read Your Bible,” Darrow now proceeded to bring down the house! Hays made a request, “The defense desires to call Mr. Bryan as a witness.” Despite objections by Prosecutor B. G. McKenzie, Bryan took the stand under

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<sup>35</sup> *Complete Stenographic Report*, 183.

<sup>36</sup> Larson, *Summer for the Gods*, 132.

<sup>37</sup> “Bryan Now Regrets Barring of Experts,” *New York Times*, 18 July 1925, 2, quoted in Larson, *Summer for the Gods*, 184.

<sup>38</sup> “Darrow’s Statement,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 19 July 1925, 1, quoted in Larson, *Summer for the Gods*, 184.

<sup>39</sup> Russell D. Owen, “The Significance of the Scopes Trial: Issues and Personalities,” *Current History*, September 1925, 881.

<sup>40</sup> Darrow, *The Story of My Life*, 258.

the condition that he be allowed to question Darrow and the other defense lawyers. Darrow began by asking Bryan if everything in the Bible should be literally interpreted. He asked about Jonah and the whale. Bryan said the Bible mentioned a big fish, not a whale. He wanted to know whether Joshua made the sun stand still. Attorney General Stewart objected to Bryan being on the stand: "I do not think the defendant has a right to conduct the examination any further and I ask your honor to exclude it." Darrow questioned Bryan on what would happen if the earth stood still. He questioned him on the dating of the flood. Stewart and McKenzie objected a second time to Bryan's testimony. "This is not competent evidence," Stewart exclaimed. But Bryan retorted, "These gentlemen have not had much chance – they did not come here to try this case. They came here to try revealed religion. I am here to defend it and they can ask me any question they please." The court agreed and the courtyard applauded.<sup>41</sup>

The prosecution was right to object. All court precedent had long since been forgotten. But Bryan could not resist the opportunity to face off against Darrow, even if the terms of the debate were unfavorable. He would get his chance to turn the tables and question Darrow, or so he thought.

Stewart, objecting for the sixth time, questioned the purpose of the examination. Bryan responded, "The purpose is to cast ridicule on everybody who believes in the Bible, and I am perfectly willing that the world shall know that these gentlemen have no other purpose than ridiculing every Christian who believes in the Bible." Darrow retorted,

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<sup>41</sup> Complete Stenographic Report, 284-288.

“We have the purpose of preventing bigots and ignoramuses from controlling the education of the United States and you know it, and that is all.”<sup>42</sup> After one more heated exchange, the court adjourned. The next day the trial would be over. Darrow had accomplished his purpose.

The media reaction was quick and derisive. Full transcripts of the previous day’s discourse went to every corner of the earth. The headline from the *New York Times* announcing the end of the trial, screeched, “Crowd At The End Surges to Darrow.”<sup>43</sup> *Current History* portrayed Bryan as a “weary, heartbroken man” proclaiming that “his ignorance of many things on which he had professed authority had been made a record for everyone to read.” The magazine pronounced, “Bryan was beaten and beaten badly.”<sup>44</sup> In England, George Bernard Shaw pontificated, “It is not often that a single state can make a whole continent ridiculous, or a single man set Europe asking whether America has ever really been civilized, but Tennessee and Mr. Bryan have brought off this double event.”<sup>45</sup> Darrow’s perspective was even more ludicrous. Speaking of Bryan, he said, “But his whole makeup had evidently changed, and now he was a wild animal at bay. . . . He had reached a stage of hallucination that would impel him to commit any cruelty that he believed would help his cause.”<sup>46</sup> Even in eulogizing Bryan’s death, *The Saturday Review* could not help taking a swipe. “Two or three weeks ago the Tennessee ‘monkey’ trial

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 299.

<sup>43</sup> *New York Times*, 22 July 1925, 2.

<sup>44</sup> Owen, “Scopes Trial,” *Current History*, September 1925, 882-883.

<sup>45</sup> George Bernard Shaw, “Tennessee Is Making Whole Continent Ridiculous, Observes Shaw,” *Birmingham News*, 12 July 1925, 13.

<sup>46</sup> Darrow, *The Story of My Life*, 277.



was an occasion *pour rire*,” it reported. “Today the death of its principal protagonist has invested it with a certain dignity. For a moment the noise of laughter is stilled.”<sup>47</sup>

Obviously, the supporters of Bryan had a different view of the events. Walter D. Buchanan, Pastor of Broadway Presbyterian Church in New York City, saw in Bryan a “valiant Knight of God” and an “illustrious defender of the faith,” someone who was able to stand up against “the apostles of evolution” who had now grown “bolder in their attack.” There was a time, he said, “when they spoke softly and almost whispered their doubts and new theories; now they spoke in clarion tones.” He continued:

It was significant that in a land founded by Christian and devout ancestors their children stood up boldly denouncing their fathers’ faith in the account of creation as contained in Genesis, and asserting that man descended from lower animals, which was based upon an unproved hypothesis. The attitude and animus of these Evolutionists was significant. They were, as they always are, autocratic. They told the Court it was ignorant. In fact, they declared that they had all the scholarship and new knowledge and that all others were ignoramuses.<sup>48</sup>

It was against this attack on biblical Christianity that Bryan stood his ground. And it was against this backdrop that the fundamentalists<sup>49</sup> rejoiced in the guilty verdict handed down to Mr. Scopes. Speaking after the trial, Bryan himself said, “If I should die tomorrow, I should feel that much has been accomplished in the greatest cause for enlightening humanity ever known. I believe that on the basis of the accomplishments of

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<sup>47</sup>*The Saturday Review* 140 (1 August 1925), 124.

<sup>48</sup> Walter D. Buchanan, “The Significance of the Scopes Trial: From the Standpoint of Fundamentalism,” *Current History*, September 1925, 884-885.

<sup>49</sup> In 1920, Curtis Lee Laws, a Baptist editor of the *Watchman-Examiner* coined the term “fundamentalist” to distinguish those who believed in the fundamentals of the Christian faith from the modernists within the Northern Baptist Convention. The term quickly came to be used for all theological conservatives regardless of denomination. The term was derived from a series of pamphlets, *The Fundamentals*, published from 1910 to 1915 to defend biblical Christianity from modernism. The essential beliefs of the fundamentalists were: “the Virgin Birth, the resurrection and deity of Christ, His substitutionary atonement, the Second Coming, and the authority and inerrancy of the Bible” in Bruce L. Shelley, “Fundamentalism,” in *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed.

the last few weeks I could truthfully say well done.”<sup>50</sup> Ironically, Bryan died only five days after the close of the trial amidst a flurry of activity to press the offense.

The actual significance of the trial took several years to come into focus. After the trial, Charles Potter, who had refused to testify for the defense because he rejected their ruse that the Bible and evolution were compatible, forecasted “a national epidemic of antievolution lawmaking.”<sup>51</sup> Only two more states would bar evolution in the classroom: Mississippi in 1926 and Arkansas in 1928. However, “what they failed to achieve by statewide statute was often accomplished by local regulations and administrative actions.” Incredibly, “in 1926, the year after the trial, eleven states made Bible reading compulsory.”<sup>52</sup>

This could only happen if the vast majority of Americans still believed that the Bible was the inspired Word of God. “George Fort Milton asserted that the basic religious views of Tennesseans were no different from those of most Americans.”<sup>53</sup> In a study done four years later, “Robert and Helen Lynd lent support to his contention that ‘the mass of the American people are Fundamentalists.’”<sup>54</sup> By fundamentalists, they meant that “the Bible is still the foundation rock on which Christianity stands, the book of authority, on every pulpit in every Christian Church as the warrant for the existence of that church.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> *Birmingham News*, 27 July 1925, 1.

<sup>51</sup> Larson, *Summer for the Gods*, 117, 202.

<sup>52</sup> William B. Gatewood, Jr. Editor, *Controversy in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Evolution* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), 224.

<sup>53</sup> George F. Milton, “A Dayton Postscript” *The Outlook* CXL (August 19, 1925), 550, quoted in Gatewood, Jr., *Controversy in the Twenties*, 37.

<sup>54</sup> Robert Lynd and Helen Lynd, *Middletown: A Study of Contemporary American Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1929), 315-331, quoted in Gatewood, Jr., *Controversy in the Twenties*, 37.

<sup>55</sup> “The Tennessee Legacy,” *Christian Register*, 6 August 1925, 762.

But for how long? The Scopes trial revealed to the American people a growing divide between biblical Christianity and modernism, between those who held to the historic doctrines of the Bible and those who supported the burgeoning theories of scientific naturalism and higher criticism. “The truth is that when Mr. Darrow in his anxiety to humiliate and ridicule Mr. Bryan resorted to sneering and scoffing at the Bible,” said Walter Lippmann, “he convinced millions who act on superficial impressions that Bryan is right in his assertion that the contest at Dayton was for and against the Christian religion.”<sup>56</sup> But Bryan was right. The very nature of biblical Christianity was under siege. The faith of millions was being viciously smeared, and the religious elites looked on and smiled in approval.

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<sup>56</sup> Walter Lippmann, “Darrow’s Blunder,” *New York World*, 23 July 1925, 18 quoted in Larson, *Summer for the Gods*, 207.

## TWO

### THE GREAT DECEPTION

As one who for thirty years has preached Jesus Christ as the Son of God  
and as “the express image of the Father” I am unable to see  
any contradiction between evolution and Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

– Rev. Walter C. Whitaker

For Scopes to be acquitted, the defense needed to argue that the Bible and evolution were compatible. Darrow, after giving the classic view of evolution that man evolved “most likely” from “one-celled animals” said, “It is a process we are interested in and the Bible story is not inconsistent with that.”<sup>2</sup> Leading religious liberals, like Walter C. Whitaker, rector of St. John’s Episcopal Church in Knoxville, Tennessee, were available as expert witnesses to lend credence to the idea that Christianity and evolution were not in conflict. To accomplish this task, both the Bible of the fundamentalists and the evolution of the naturalists would need to be reconfigured. The Bible would need to be interpreted less literally; evolution would need to be infused with the Almighty.

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<sup>1</sup> *The World’s Most Famous Court Trial, State of Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes; Complete Stenographic Report of the Court Test of the Tennessee Anti-Evolution Act at Dayton, July 10 to 21, 1925, Including Speeches and Arguments of Attorneys*, ed. Leonard W. Levy (New York: Da Capo Press, 1971 [c1925]), 223.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 189.

## **The Uninspired Inspired Bible**

The defense had already admitted that the Genesis account of creation was incompatible with evolution. To rectify the problem, the straw man of “literalism” was presented. Examples like “I am crucified with Christ,” and “The little hills skipped like rams,” were used by Whitaker to show that the Bible should not always be taken literally, the implication being that neither should Genesis. “I am thoroughly convinced that God created the heavens and the earth, but I do not know how he proceeded,” stated Whitaker. “I find nothing in the Scriptures that tells me His method.”<sup>3</sup>

With the straw man of literalism in place, Shailer Mathews had been positioned to testify next. “There are two accounts in Genesis of the creation of man,” he wrote. “They are not identical and at points differ widely. It would be difficult to say which is the teaching of the Bible. The aim of both, however, is clear and wonderfully inspired.” Mathews cleverly attacked the inerrancy of the Bible while claiming to support its inspiration. His use of the word “inspired,” however, differed radically with the historic meaning of that term. Instead of understanding the Scriptures to be “God-breathed” as the Bible states, and therefore without error because God is perfect,<sup>4</sup> Mathews believed the Bible to be nothing more than the “religious interpretation” of the writers who used “the best of the then current knowledge of the universe to show how God was in the creative process.”<sup>5</sup>

At the core of the great deception by the religious elites was an ability to discredit the Bible and set aside its authority without giving the appearance of doing so. Mathews

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 224.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV), Psalm 18:30. See footnote 14 from chapter one for a definition of “literal.”

<sup>5</sup> *Complete Stenographic Report*, 224.

and Whitaker had a good teacher in Henry Ward Beecher. In the 1870s, under the influence of German higher criticism, Beecher became a master at undermining the orthodox doctrines of the Christian faith. Jonathan Blanchard, who was involved in Beecher's ordination, said, "When he is about to assail some fundamental truth, held and suffered for by the Puritans, he always begins by proclaiming himself their descendant." Alarmed by what he saw, "Blanchard described the Brooklyn pastor as a 'crafty leader of degeneracy and corruption,' and asserted that the American churches have drunk and are still drinking the poison of his teachings. . . ."<sup>6</sup>

In discussing the inspiration of the Bible, Beecher made a distinction between its practical use and its origins, claiming that the end for which the Bible is inspired is something that we can all agree on, namely, to direct man to "control his thoughts and feelings, to point out to him the distinctions between right and wrong, between piety and impiety, and between reverence and irreverence." Having thus assured his listeners that he affirmed the inspiration of the Bible, he immediately undercut it by preaching that "It is a wrong way of using the Word of God to suppose that it is in a literal and philosophical sense without flaw and error." It was his contention that these flaws or "mistakes amount to nothing" because the purpose of the Bible is to "gather together the best thoughts and the richest experiences of God's people in different ages and nations" from which we might learn "truths which respect fundamental life" through the use of common sense. He was confident that the moral truths, which were to be learned from the

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<sup>6</sup> George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 30 quoting from "Henry Ward Beecher," *Christian Cynosure* I (May 9, 1872), 118; "The Spirit of the *Cynosure*," 154 citing indebtedness to Paul Carter who pointed out this controversy, *The Spiritual Crisis*, 113-114, 124, 139.

Bible, could withstand numerous errors in its transmission. “So, then, if there be any of you who have been disturbed by the criticisms which are being made; if any of you are concerned because the idea of inspiration in which you were educated is exploded,” he caringly admonished, “take this conception of the Bible: that it is a book for universal humanity. Select from it what you need. . . . Though it is not blustering and arrogant as an authority, your life will feel it, and your moral sense will recognize it.”<sup>7</sup>

But moral sense, severed from an inerrant Bible, is subjective. The doctrines one generation was willing to maintain despite the weakened authority of the Bible, the next was ready to discard. At the McNair lectures in 1922 at the University of North Carolina, Charles Dinsmore, professor at Yale Divinity School, speaking of the higher critics, said, “The most competent men in historical research – and they are earnestly Christian men – tell us that the former theory of plenary inspiration of the Scriptures is no longer tenable.” Disapprovingly, he added, “Our fathers interpreted the Bible in much the same manner which a lawyer uses in interpreting the statutes of North Carolina. It was all an exact statement of fact and truth, and was to be so understood.” But now that the “theory of development” was being applied to the “documents” of the Christian faith, never “have there been so many spiritually minded people free from the trammels of dogmatism, and so possessed of the essential spirit of all true religion.” He exuded, “I am sure, our best scientific minds are his anointed prophets and are manifesting his spirit and revealing his ways more truly than many of our statesmen and theologians.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Henry Ward Beecher, *Plymouth Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 3, *The Bible* (Boston: Plymouth Press, 1875), 325-329, 337.

<sup>8</sup> Charles Allen Dinsmore, *Religious Certitude in an Age of Science* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1924), 22, 23, 30, iii.

Science, at the expense of Scripture, had become the new source of authority. “Formerly we consulted authority and tradition and trusted when we could not see,” said William Louis Poteat, president of Wake Forest College. “To-day we trace tradition to its sources and ask of authority, ‘Who made thee a judge over us?’ We subject religious doctrine and the interpretation of the Bible to the test of the rational faculty, just as we apply that test to all other bodies of literature and doctrine.” Poteat went so far as to say that we now rely upon science “in all matters of belief and conduct,”<sup>9</sup> a phrase that had formerly been reserved for the Bible.

The esteemed liberal pastor, Harry Emerson Fosdick, in speaking about how science had “remade from top to bottom our outlook on the physical universe” said, “the inductive method of scientific investigation has revolutionized man’s ways of discovering and using truth; the idea of evolution in biology has blossomed out into the idea of progress in human life.” Applying the strands of evolution and higher criticism to the Bible, Fosdick said, “We know now that every idea in the Bible started from primitive and childlike origins.” Higher criticism has allowed us to see “the Bible a good deal as a geologist sees the strata of the earth; we can tell when and in what order the deposits were laid down whose accumulated results constitute our Scriptures.” Remarkably, not only was the Bible subjected to science, but so was God! Fosdick explained:

As the early writings of the Old Testament clearly reveal, Jehovah, at first one among many gods, dwelt with his own special people and exercised no jurisdiction beyond their boundaries. So long, then, as religious imagination

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<sup>9</sup> William Louis Poteat, *Can a Man Be a Christian To-day?*, 2d ed. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, London: Humphrey Milford Oxford University Press, 1925), 31-32.



conceived of God as limited in his interest and power by the territory of his people, the sense of moral obligation could have no wider range. Men who cannot think of their God as caring for other peoples will not themselves care for them. So long as Jehovah and Chemosh were both real characters with settled hostility a natural estate between them, the Hebrew people of Jehovah could not be expected to recognize ethical responsibilities to the Moabitish people of Chemosh.<sup>10</sup>

Fosdick continued by saying that the god of the Hebrews slowly evolved into the God of the New Testament with “Christ and his Gospel” becoming the culmination of this religious evolutionary thought.<sup>11</sup>

Fosdick, in resisting the pressure from science to completely usurp Scripture, claimed that the essence of religion was the “abiding and reproducible experiences of man.”<sup>12</sup> Beecher, fifty years earlier, expressed a similar idea. “You might sweep the Bible itself out of existence,” he said, “and those great causes from which originally sprang a visible religion, a visible worship, churches, and the Bible – those fundamental causes, still existing with primitive power, would reproduce them.” Beecher never told us how he determined what those fundamental causes were. He did say though, that “No doctrines are fundamental except those that teach the divine existence and government, or that teach the condition and wants of human nature, and its reconstruction, its re-organization into Christian manhood.”<sup>13</sup> Despite the damaging effects of higher criticism on Beecher’s orthodoxy, the primitive fundamental cause still stood behind his view of Christianity. Whatever other doctrines Beecher was willing to discard, he was determined to hang on to the belief that God in some way oversaw the affairs of this world and the rise of Christianity in the hearts of men.

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<sup>10</sup> Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Modern Use of the Bible* (New York: Macmillan, 1924), 44, 11, 6, 13.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 170.

<sup>13</sup> Beecher, *Sermons*, vol. 4, *The Sure Foundation*, 247, 251.

Whereas Beecher maintained an emphasis on God reproducing man's religious experiences, Fosdick centered the experience squarely with man. "Religion at its fountainhead is an individual, psychological experience," Fosdick said.<sup>14</sup> This made sense if one applied the principles of historicism, which "started with the post-Kantian premise that the human mind plays a creative role in defining what is reality." Since "various cultures, subcultures, and individuals each created their own definitions of truth, adapted to a particular time and place,"<sup>15</sup> no authority was safe. Potter maintained that "the enlightened conscience of man is . . . the final and only guide" and "the court of last appeal."<sup>16</sup> Reality, and therefore religion, could now mean whatever one wanted it to mean. It was individualistic, subjective, and not testable.

Now even Beecher's "fundamental cause" and Fosdick's "abiding and reproducible experiences" would not be able to withstand the assaults of liberalism. Mathews said, "Little by little we cease to think of the Reason and Purpose immanent in the cosmos as sovereign, and shape our ultimate conceptions of such limitless reality as *God*."<sup>17</sup> Dinsmore went even further. "Neither can we think of him as the First Cause – for the law of continuity denies the validity of the conception of a beginning," he said. "It is impossible to conceive of a condition when there was God, but no universe. We must think of the universe as always the living garment of an eternal God – who is the ground

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<sup>14</sup> Harry Emerson Fosdick, *As I See Religion* (New York and London: Harper, 1932), 6.

<sup>15</sup> George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 212.

<sup>16</sup> John Roach Straton and Charles Francis Potter, *The Battle over the Bible: First in the Series of Fundamentalist-Modernist Debates*, (New York: Doran, 1924), 85, 87.

<sup>17</sup> Shailer Mathews, *The Faith of Modernism* (New York: AMS Press, 1969 [1924]), 109.

of all being, in whom all things subsist.”<sup>18</sup> This was very close to making God nothing more than nature.

While Fosdick and Mathews maintained the idea of personality in the universe, others did not. Potter, though inconsistent concerning the idea of personality, finally said, “What I am maintaining is, that the Creator concept of God ought to go out of doors.”<sup>19</sup>

Ultimately, Potter would strip God of everything supernatural:

If God was able to interfere at certain crises in the past, this Hebrew anthropomorphic God, and do the things that he was supposed to have done at certain times in the past, why didn't he interfere between 1914 and 1918? No, my friends, the World War absolutely dissipated forever that idea of God. God is with us, but we have got to change our idea of God as every great epoch has demanded a similar change. We must recognize that this God that we are talking of is the God who sleeps in the mineral, stirs in the vegetable, feels in the animal, and thinks in man, and if another World War is to be prevented, it must be done not by a transcendent God in the skies, but by the God in you and me.<sup>20</sup>

### **Evolution Plus God**

Without an inspired, infallible Bible to guide them, the religious elites had traveled light-years away from the simple truth: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”<sup>21</sup> Yet that was the position they would need to take if they were to remain on good terms with Bible-believing Christians. Potter found out the hard way that the good folks of Dayton were not about to let a skeptic of the Bible preach from one of their pulpits. Threatening to wreck their building, the members of the Methodist church barred Potter from speaking, causing their minister to resign. In side by side stories, the *Washington Post* highlighted the contrast between the Potter debacle and a

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<sup>18</sup> Dinsmore, *Religious Certitude*, 18.

<sup>19</sup> Straton and Potter, *Evolution Versus Creation: Second in the Series of Fundamentalist-Modernist Debates* (New York: Doran, 1924), 87.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 93, 29.

<sup>21</sup> Genesis 1:1

sermon given by the Secretary of the Navy, Curtis D. Wilbur, to the First Congregational Church in San Francisco that same Sunday with the headline, “Wilbur, In Church, Defends Bible As Against Evolution.” But the body of the story revealed that “No harm would be done if the theory of evolution were considered as merely one of the methods employed by God in the process of creation.”<sup>22</sup> The conclusion was clear. Church members might be willing to accept evolution as a means of creation, but not as an explanation for the origin of life. God would need to remain.

But Darwinian evolution had no room for God. Charles Hodge, the great Presbyterian theologian of the late 1800s, revealed “the heart” of Darwin’s theory. “The main idea of his system lies in the word ‘natural.’ . . . He uses the word natural as antithetical to supernatural. Natural selection is a selection made by natural laws, working without intention and design,” he said. “The conclusion of the whole matter is, that the denial of design in nature is virtually the denial of God.”<sup>23</sup> Dr. Asa Gray, who would become the leading proponent of theistic evolution, said, “The proposition that the things and events in nature were not designed to be so, if logically carried out, is doubtless tantamount to atheism.”<sup>24</sup>

Even though religious liberals had reduced the Bible to just another book, they were not ready to abandon the concept of God yet. They were, no doubt, relieved when scientists concluded that Darwinism was “not synonymous with organic evolution, nor

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<sup>22</sup> Philip Kinsley, “Dr. Potter Barred by Dayton Threat to Wreck Church,” and Albert W. Fox, “Wilbur, In Church, Defends Bible As Against Evolution,” *Washington Post*, 13 July 1925, 1.

<sup>23</sup> Charles Hodge, *What is Darwinism?* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, 1874), 40-41, 173.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 176, quoting Asa Gray, *Atlantic Monthly*, October 1860. The three articles in the July, August, and October numbers of the *Atlantic*, on this subject, have been reprinted with the name of Dr. Asa Gray as their author.

with the theory of descent.” Vernon L. Kellogg in 1907 wrote, “The fair truth is that the Darwinian selection theories, considered with regard to their claimed capacity to be an independently sufficient mechanical explanation of descent, stand to-day seriously discredited in the biological world.” Kirtley Mather, professor of geology at Harvard University and an ardent Baptist, in 1926 still concurred. “Darwin’s . . . suggestion as to how evolution may have occurred has not withstood the tests applied by critical students,” he affirmed.<sup>25</sup>

Surprisingly, even though Darwin’s theory of evolution was largely debunked by the turn of the century, the religious elites hung on to the framework of evolution. “About the principle and fact of evolution there is no question in the minds of responsible biologists,” said Poteat. “But the method of evolution, the process by which organisms vary and new types arise, is yet unsettled.” Lamarck, Darwin, Eimer, Weismann, DeVries all offered suggestions, he added.<sup>26</sup> William H. P. Faunce, president of Brown University, a Baptist school, said, “These scholars do not affirm Darwinism or any other “ism.” They are quite ready to acknowledge that Darwin overemphasized the struggle for existence in the organic world . . .” And yet he went on to add that “the doctrine of evolution, rightly understood and interpreted, is today one of the most powerful aids to religious faith. . . . It has supplanted the old paralyzing conception of a ‘world-machine,’ a world mechanical and lifeless, grinding out human destiny without end.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Kirtley F. Mather, “The Psychology of the Anti-Evolutionists,” *The Harvard Graduates’ Magazine*, XXV (September 1926), 8-20, compiled in Gatewood, Jr. Editor, *Controversy in the Twenties*, 192.

<sup>26</sup> Poteat, *Can a Man Be a Christian To-day?*, 21-22.

<sup>27</sup> William H. P. Faunce, “Freedom in School and Church” *World’s Work* XLV (March 1923), 509-511, compiled in Gatewood, Jr. Editor, *Controversy in the Twenties*, 261-262.

Darwinism had brought the scientific and religious worlds to the brink of materialistic naturalism – the belief that nature is all that there is – and the worlds blinked. Science, because it could not substantiate the mechanisms of natural selection; religion, because it could not survive without God. Having shrunk back, Faunce said, “In place of that soulless mechanism we now have a growing organism.”<sup>28</sup> By distinguishing Darwinism from evolution, religious liberals “came to see that the discovery of the method of creation did not dispense with the Divine agency in creation, and along with other human disciplines accepted and incorporated the great conception of evolution.”<sup>29</sup>

In his humorous satire which he wrote at the time of the Scopes trial, George Bernard Shaw encapsulated the views of the modernists. Mocking Tennessee and Mr. Butler, he ridiculed those who opposed evolution. “They have come up against a modern idea,” he said. “Not a new idea, of course; only the idea of evolution, which has attained the respectable age of 135 years. It came into modern thought in 1790, and is therefore a little older than the state of Tennessee.” But like the modernists, he also redefined it:

It got a set back from Charles Darwin in the middle of the nineteenth century. Charles, or rather his followers, tried to make out that the changes attributed to evolution were a mere chapter of accidents with no sort of sense in them. But that was only a soulless episode in the investigation of the facts. . . . Charles Darwin did, indeed, as Samuel Butler said, for a time ‘banish mind from the universe’ (which perhaps accounts for Mr. Bryan, who was born thereabouts), but nobody under 70 now believes that life as we know it could have been produced by what Charles Darwin called natural selection. . . . Evolution today means creative evolution, the operation of an aspiring and creative purpose, which is none the less sure to have the last word, because it proceeds by the method of trial and error.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 262.

<sup>29</sup> Poteat, *Can a Man Be a Christian To-day?*, 34.

<sup>30</sup> George Bernard Shaw, *Birmingham News*, 12 July 1925, 13.

In redefining evolution, Shaw also gave expression to the liberal's God. Instead of being an omnipotent, omniscient Being, God had been reduced to an aspiring and creative purpose limited by the method of trial and error. Evolution had succeeded in infusing itself with God, but it was not the God of the Bible.

### **Converging Forces**

Despite the fact that “creative” evolution was scientifically and theologically bankrupt, Shaw made it clear that evolution was not an option, it was a given. When Kellogg reported that Darwin's selection theories had been discredited, he also stated that “no replacing hypothesis or theory of species-forming has been offered by the opponents of selection which has met with any general or even considerable acceptance by naturalists.”<sup>31</sup> Yet evolution, devoid of a mechanism that could make it work, still held sway among the religious elites. Why was this? The answer was stunning. It was all that they had!

Higher criticism had stripped the Bible of its inspiration, making religion nothing more than the speculations of man. The atheist H. L. Mencken, drawing out the implications of higher criticism, claimed, “It is highly probable, indeed, that the first priest appeared in the world simultaneously with the first religion; nay, that he actually invented it.” “What brought it into the world was man's eternal wonder and his eternal hope,” he said. “It represents one of his bold efforts – and perhaps not the least of them – to penetrate the unknowable, to put down the intolerable, to refashion the universe nearer his heart's desire.” Playing the compassionate town skeptic, he patronized, “ My belief is

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<sup>31</sup> Vernon L. Kellogg, *Darwinism To-Day; a Discussion of Present-Day Scientific Criticism of the Darwinian Selection Theories, Together with a Brief Account of the Principal Other Proposed Auxiliary and Alternative Theories of Species-Forming* (New York: Holt, 1907), 5.

that it is a poor device to that end – that when it is examined objectively it testifies to his imbecility quite as much as to his high striving. But that belief is only a belief. The immense interest and importance of the thing itself remain.” Religion was important, but only because man needed it to be. “Go beneath it,” he said, “and one finds invariably the same sense of helplessness before the cosmic mysteries, and the same pathetic attempt to resolve it by appealing to higher powers.” “Today no really civilized man or woman believes in the cosmogony of Genesis, nor in the reality of Hell, nor in any of the other ancient imbecilities that entertain the mob.”<sup>32</sup> What could the liberals say in response? Fosdick himself had said:

Moreover, when the modern mind hears the creeds upon which many of the churches still insist, with all the corollaries brought out by controversy and urged as indispensables of religious truth – old cosmologies, doctrines of Biblical infallibility, miracles like the virgin birth or physical resurrection – the reaction is not simply incredulity, although incredulity is undoubtedly emphatic – but wonder as to what such things have to do with religion.<sup>33</sup>

The liberals through the use of higher criticism had completely dismantled the authority of the Bible and with it biblical Christianity.<sup>34</sup>

Without an absolute source for truth, the religious elites had no choice but to turn to science. If the scientists concluded that evolution was factual, who were they to argue? Dinsmore admonished, “Let us never forget that priests and theologians and laymen cannot pass judgment on the seasoned conclusions of science.” Religion was now off-limits to science. “There is no more insidious and dangerous temptation than for one who has spent his life in one of these departments of thought to venture into the other

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<sup>32</sup> H. L. Mencken, *Treatise on the Gods* (New York: Knopf, 1930), 10, ix, vi, 297.

<sup>33</sup> Fosdick, *As I See Religion*, 21.

<sup>34</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:12-19. Historic Christianity is founded on the basis of a physical resurrection.



department for the purpose of passing judgment upon its facts and conclusions,” he cautioned. This admonition was supposed to protect both science and religion, but then he said, “Science will greatly modify our theories and speculations.” In his book *Religious Certitude in an Age of Science*, Dinsmore had a chapter on testing the reality of religion, but no corresponding chapter on testing the reality of science. Though he said that there were “two different kinds of knowledge, each resting on faith, each established on experimentation after its own kind,” it was obvious that science trumped religion.<sup>35</sup>

Poteat bewailed that the fundamentalists were still sitting in judgment of evolution. “Ardent men throughout the country still insist, in the name of religion, that Genesis is in irreconcilable opposition to the science of the time,” he cried. “A widespread obscurantism identifies the new learning with heresy, to the confusion of thoughtful Christians.” He concluded by saying that “the essential things of the Christian experience are beclouded by intellectual subtleties which few of us are able to follow.”<sup>36</sup> His point was that it was just too complicated for the average person, and the uneducated Bible-believers, though zealous, should stop their attack on science. But just as the fundamentalists were using their Bibles to critique and criticize evolution, so also were liberals using evolution to critique and criticize the Bible. Mather said, “The fundamentals of every religion are to-day undergoing the most searching examination they have ever had, in the light of the most brilliant and pitiless blaze that modern science can project.” Pressing on, he said, “The science of Genesis is in complete opposition to

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<sup>35</sup> Dinsmore, *Religious Certitude*, 35, 5, 34, 74.

<sup>36</sup> Poteat, *Can a Man Be a Christian Today?*, ix.

the science of the Twentieth Century; no amount of quibbling over the meaning of the terms can harmonize the two.”<sup>37</sup>

Hodge experienced the same objection from Doctor Haeckel. “He forbids the right to speak on these vital subjects, to all who are not thoroughly versed in biology, and who are not entirely emancipated from the trammels of their long cherished traditional beliefs,” Hodge explained. “This, as the whole context shows, means that a man in order to be entitled to be heard on the evolution theory, must be willing to renounce his faith not only in the Bible, but in God, in the soul, in a future life, and become a monistic materialist.”<sup>38</sup> Hodge knew that if evolution were to be followed to its logical conclusion, there would be no room for the supernatural! God would cease to exist and so would biblical Christianity.

### **The Upper Story**

With both higher criticism and naturalistic evolution pushing the liberals to a conclusion they did not want to accept in the 1870s, something had to be done. “They could choose to say with Hodge that Darwinism was irreconcilable with Christianity – a new form of infidelity – and that it was speculative and hypothetical rather than truly scientific.” Or they could redefine “the relationship between science and religion” along the lines of the “philosophical tradition of Kant and German Idealism and in the theological work of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Albert Ritschl.” Thus “religion would no longer be seen as dependent on historical or scientific fact susceptible of objective inquiry.” The practical result was a division between religion and science, with religion

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<sup>37</sup> Kirtley F. Mather, *Science in Search of God* (New York: Holt, 1928), 4, 38.

<sup>38</sup> Hodge, *What is Darwinism?*, 137-38.

having “to do with the spiritual, with the heart, with religious experience, and with moral sense or moral action,”<sup>39</sup> and science having to do with the natural, with “reason,” and with “knowledge.”<sup>40</sup> The understanding being that “there are common premises upon which they can live together in peace, with science on the ground floor and religion in the upper story – science keeping the premises in good order and religion supplying the motive and the home atmosphere.”<sup>41</sup> “Thus science could have its autonomy, and religion would be beyond its reach.”<sup>42</sup>

In theory, each field should recognize the authority of the other in their respective fields. “We are not proposing to accommodate religion to science, but that religious teachers recognize the authority of science in its proper sphere, just as scientific teachers ought to recognize the authority of religion in its proper sphere,” Poteat explained.<sup>43</sup> In reality, it did not work that way. The religious elites could not keep the naturalists from infringing on their spiritual world. The problem had to do with the concept of “personality” in the universe. Mathews pointed out that there are “in fact, one of two world-views logically tenable; the materialistic or naturalistic, and the religious.” The naturalist asserted “that the uniformity of nature is hostile to any freedom of personality in the real sense; that there is no evidence of purpose in the universe.” He argued that “scientific interpretations of nature which deny all freedom of choice and reduce the intellectual life to chemical and physical activity are not consistent with religion, and

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<sup>39</sup> Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 20-21.

<sup>40</sup> Philip E. Johnson, *Reason in the Balance: The Case Against Naturalism in Science, Law & Education* (Downer’s Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1995), 10.

<sup>41</sup> Dinsmore, *Religious Certitude*, 31.

<sup>42</sup> Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 21.

<sup>43</sup> Poteat, *Can a Man Be a Christian To-day?*, 85.

religion is not consistent with them. In defending his position, he almost sounded like a fundamentalist, as he pointed out six theological beliefs that were not held by naturalism.

1. God, the immanent personal reason, purpose and activity in the universe to whom all other wills must conform.
2. The individuality of man, distinct from and superior to, although derived from, lower forms of life.
3. The actuality of personal relationship of God and man through the activity of each.
4. Sin as opposition to the will of God, the ultimate personality of the universe.
5. Salvation of help to more personal life resulting from the establishment of proper relations between the human and divine personalities.
6. Life after death as conditioned by the individual's character and relations with God.

Naturalism had accepted the premise of Darwinian evolution and followed it to its philosophical outcome, namely, that there is no God or personality in the universe and therefore no sin, salvation, or afterlife. It taught that man was merely the product of mindless, purposeless chance without freedom or choice. The resulting implication was that life is meaningless. It was against this reality that Mathews balked. Still, he had to admit that "if there are in the activity of the universe no qualities which justify belief in cosmic reason and purpose, religion will have to go."<sup>44</sup>

Mathews was not alone in his consternation. Fosdick believed that personality was the key to the universe and the key contribution of Christianity. "Somehow an absolutely mindless universe simply is not a universe," he said. "Even physical science, when it gets back to the ultimate reality which it can glimpse behind molecules, atoms, electrons, and

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<sup>44</sup> Shailer Mathews, *Contributions of Science to Religion* (New York: Appleton, 1924), 4, 5, 10-11.

protons, finds a series of mathematical relationships. Now, mathematical relationships, whatever else they may be, are mental.” Fosdick in attacking naturalism made this charge: “All materialism labors under this fatal disability, that in order to get the actual human world explained as a material creation, it must endow matter with such potencies as make it no longer matter but a spiritual force gifted with the attributes of God.”<sup>45</sup> But Kirtley Mather simply replied that “attributing God with ‘personality’ is the same misuse of anthropomorphic expressions that the ancients made.”<sup>46</sup> Now that had to sting, because Fosdick had discarded the fundamental doctrines of biblical Christianity following the same line of reasoning.

Having abandoned biblical authority and historic Christianity, and having found the upper story empty, there was nothing left to stem the onslaught of naturalistic evolution. Modernists who had started down the road of theological liberalism would find themselves embracing materialistic humanism. The uniqueness of Scripture and the philosophical nature of evolution would be suppressed. And the great deception would continue.

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<sup>45</sup> Fosdick, *As I See Religion*, 46-47.

<sup>46</sup> Mather, *Science in Search of God*, 71.

## THREE

### THE TRUTH SUPPRESSED

If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.<sup>1</sup>

– Charles Darwin

By the time of the Scopes trial, scientists, in general, had all but abandoned Darwin's mechanism of natural selection. Dr. N. S. Shaler, professor of Geology at Harvard University admitted, "It begins to be evident that the Darwinian hypothesis is still essentially unverified. . . . It is not yet proven that a single species of the two or three million now inhabiting the earth has been established solely or mainly by the operation of natural selection."<sup>2</sup> Despite Darwin's declaration that his theory must inevitably self-destruct without the corresponding mechanism of natural selection, the opposite occurred. "The plain truth of the matter," stated Horatio Hackett Newman, professor of zoology at the University of Chicago, "is that never before in the history of science has there been so nearly a unanimous acceptance of the Principle of Evolution and so little consensus of

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection: or The Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life* (1872), 6th ed. (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 154.

<sup>2</sup> John Roach Straton and Charles Francis Potter, *Evolution Versus Creation: Second in the Series of Fundamentalist-Modernist Debates* (New York: Doran, 1924), 55.

opinion as to its causes."<sup>3</sup> Fundamentalists, like John Roach Straton, took Darwin at his word, and assumed that evolution was about to fade away. "If now there is no 'natural selection,'" he asserted, "then we are driven of necessity back to supernatural selection."<sup>4</sup> It appeared that the debate over evolution had come full circle. "The crux of the whole present controversy then is exactly the same as it was sixty-five years ago when Darwin published his epoch-making volume: is evolution merely a wild guess," Newman queried, "or is it an established principle supported by an adequate array of facts?"<sup>5</sup>

### **The Facts of Evolution**

The facts, according to the theologian Charles Hodge, were found not in what evolution affirmed, but in what it denied. "It is that Darwin rejects all teleology, or the doctrine of final causes," Hodge stated. "He denies design in any of the organisms in the vegetable or animal world. He teaches that the eye was formed without any purpose of producing an organ of vision."<sup>6</sup> This denial of design was paramount to atheism. Enoch Fitch Burr, lecturer on the scientific evidences of religion at Amherst College in 1873, denounced evolution as "founded by atheism, claimed by atheism, supported by atheism," and "used exclusively in the interest of atheism." Denying design was nothing less than an attempt "to suppress all evidence for the existence of God."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Horatio Hackett Newman, "Animal Evolution," compiled in Shailer Mathews, *Contributions of Science to Religion* (New York: Appleton, 1927), 165. While natural selection was definitely waning, Newman revealed that "some attach even more importance" to natural selection "than did Darwin himself."

<sup>4</sup> Straton and Potter, *Evolution Versus Creation*, 56.

<sup>5</sup> Newman, "Animal Evolution," 166.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Hodge, *What is Darwinism?* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Company, 1874), 52.

<sup>7</sup> George E. Webb, *The Evolution Controversy in America* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1994), 17-18.

This denial was a direct attack against the definitive work of William Paley, author of *Natural Theology: or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity*, who framed his argument in 1802 around the statement: "I had found a *watch* upon the ground." In examining the watch, "the question, which irresistibly presses upon our thoughts, is, whence this contrivance and design?" Paley observed:

If the several parts had been differently shaped from what they are, or of a different size from what they are, or placed after any other manner, or in any other order, than that in which they are placed, either no motion at all would have been carried on in the machine, or none which would have answered the use that is now served by it.<sup>8</sup>

In applying his analogy of the watch to the human body, Paley raised questions that have yet to be answered by evolutionists. Hodge quoted Darwin to prove the point that evolutionists had no answer to the question of design. "To suppose that the eye with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different degrees of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed," Darwin said, "by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree."<sup>9</sup>

But Darwin believed [by faith] in the hope that future scientific discoveries would prove him right. Such was not to be. Michael J. Behe, working in the field of molecular biology, has now shown that evolution on the cellular level is completely implausible. "As biochemists have begun to examine apparently simple structures like cilia and flagella, they have discovered staggering complexity, with dozens or even hundreds of precisely tailored parts," according to Behe, echoing Paley's analogy of the watch, only

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<sup>8</sup> William Paley, *Natural Theology: or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity* (Boston: Lincoln & Edwards, 1829), 5, 12, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Hodge, *What is Darwinism?*, 59.



now with microscopic organisms. Behe continued, “As the number of required parts increases, the difficulty of gradually putting the system together skyrockets and the likelihood of indirect scenarios plummets.”<sup>10</sup> Richard Dawkins, a leading proponent of evolution, understood the problem. “Since we define an undisputed adaptation as an adaptation that is too complex to have come about by chance, how is it possible,” he questioned, “for a theory to invoke only blind physical forces in explanation?” Dawkins’ solution was problematic. “The answer – Darwin’s answer – is astonishingly simple when we consider how self-evident Paley’s Divine Watchmaker must have seemed to his contemporaries,” Dawkins surmised. “The key is that the coadapted parts do not have to be assembled all at once. They can be put together in small stages. But they really do have to be small stages,” he added. “Otherwise we are back again with the problem we started with: the creation by chance of complexity that is too great to have been created by chance!”<sup>11</sup>

But this dilemma was exactly what Behe had proven. By discovering that microorganisms were “irreducibly complex,” by which he meant “a single system composed of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, wherein the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning,” and showing that “unbridgeable chasms occur even at the tiniest level of life,” Behe had effectively refuted Dawkins. The simple fact was irreducibly complex biological systems can not be formed by “numerous, successive, slight modifications.”

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<sup>10</sup> Michael J. Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 73.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Dawkins, “Universal Darwinism,” compiled in *But Is It Science? The Philosophical Question in the Creation/Evolution Controversy*, ed. Michael Ruse (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988), 210.

Dawkins could assert Darwinian molecular evolution all he wanted to, but in the words of Behe, it was “merely bluster.” “There has been virtually no attempt to account for the origin of specific, complex biomolecular systems, much less any progress,” Behe revealed. “There is no publication in the scientific literature – in prestigious journals, specialty journals, or books – that describes how molecular evolution of any real, complex, biochemical system either did occur or even might have occurred,” Behe added. “If you focus your search on the question of how molecular machines – the basis of life – developed, you will find an eerie and complete silence.” What was not silent, however, was the “loud, clear, piercing cry of ‘design!’”<sup>12</sup> A discovery<sup>13</sup> at the molecular level “so unambiguous and so significant that it must be ranked as one of the greatest achievements in the history of science.”<sup>14</sup>

Since irreducibly complex design was evident in the universe, the logical conclusion followed that there must be a designer. This, too, would be denied by the “facts” of evolution. Paley spoke of the designer as “the intending mind, the adapting hand, the intelligence by which that hand was directed.” It was the logical response to his question, “Whence this contrivance and design?” For Paley, creation could not create itself, just as the watch could not reproduce itself.<sup>15</sup> Design demanded a designer.

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<sup>12</sup> Behe, *Darwin's Black Box*, 39, 15, 39, 186, 185, x, 5.

<sup>13</sup> “Speaking before the Glasgow Convention of the [British Association for the Advancement of Science at Oxford], Professor J. Bronte Gatenby of Trinity College, Dublin, in 1928 announced the discovery of certain minute organisms with the cell protoplasm, and closed with the remark that ‘only a person ignorant of cell structure now endeavors to apply a mechanistic philosophy’” in Theodore Graebner, *God and Cosmos* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1946), 121.

<sup>14</sup> Behe, *Darwin's Black Box*, 232-233.

<sup>15</sup> Paley, *Natural Theology*, 12, 11.

What Paley would have been surprised to hear was "that the mechanism of the watch was no proof of contrivance, only a motive to induce the mind to think so."<sup>16</sup> In ignoring the "appearance" of design, Thomas Henry Huxley, the self-proclaimed "bulldog" for Darwin, stated, "The fundamental proposition of evolution is that the whole world, living and not living, is the result of mutual interaction, according to definite laws, of the forces possessed by the molecules of which the primitive nebulosity of the universe was composed."<sup>17</sup> Or as Dawkins would have us believe, "The great virtue of the idea of evolution is that it explains, in terms of blind physical forces, the existence of undisputed adaptations whose statistical improbability is enormous, without recourse to the supernatural or the mystical."<sup>18</sup> Design was not real. It just looked like it was real.<sup>19</sup> The real power behind the universe was the "blind physical forces" resident in the "molecules." But Dawkins had already defined undisputed adaptations as adaptations that were too complex to have come about by chance! Yet now he was proposing just that.

In 1906, F. Wayland-Smith laid out the various theories for the origin of life:

1. That it is an insoluble mystery.
2. That all matter is alive even dry sticks and stones.
3. That life is due to spontaneous generation.
4. That it is due to chance.
5. That it was started by forces like those of crystallization.
6. That it sprang from *Bathybius*.<sup>20</sup>

Huxley, in his effort to exclude the supernatural, exalted that he had discovered "Nature's

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 5, 12, 8.

<sup>17</sup> F. Wayland-Smith, *Materialism and Christianity* (Kenwood, NY: F. Wayland-Smith, 1906), 10, quoting Thomas Henry Huxley, *Critiques and Addresses*, 305.

<sup>18</sup> Dawkins, "Universal Darwinism," 210.

<sup>19</sup> Psychologists have gone so far as to propose that "human beings come into the world with a predisposition to believe in supernatural phenomena" and that "this predisposition is an accidental by-product of cognitive functioning gone awry" in Paul Bloom, "Is God an Accident?" *The Atlantic Monthly* (December 2005), [www.theatlantic.com/doc/prem/200512/god-accident](http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/prem/200512/god-accident).

<sup>20</sup> Wayland-Smith, *Materialism and Christianity*, 10.

grand store of *protoplasm*, and that here at last was the solution of the great life puzzle!" Naming the sticky ooze, "Bathybius," he announced in an article in the *Microscopical Journal* that this substance was – "a vast sheet of living matter enveloping the whole earth beneath the seas."<sup>21</sup> Seven years later, however, in 1875, Huxley had to recant, saying about Bathybius: "I fear the thing to which I gave that name is little more than sulphate of lime, precipitated in the flocculent state from the sea water by the strong alkali in which the specimens of deep sea soundings which I examined were preserved."<sup>22</sup>

Huxley at least had the decency to recant an obvious error. Dawkins, in seeking to rid the universe of the designer, not only confessed that undisputed adaptations existed on the earth by chance, but that they had also occurred throughout the universe.

It is widely believed on statistical grounds that life has arisen many times all around the universe (Asimov, 1979; Billingham, 1981). However varied in detail alien forms of life may be, there will probably be certain principles that are fundamental to all life, everywhere. I suggest that prominent among these will be the principles of Darwinism. Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection is more than a local theory to account for the existence and form of life on Earth. It is probably the only theory that *can* adequately account for the phenomena that we associate with life.<sup>23</sup>

Dawkins' problem was the same as Darwin's. By excluding design, purpose, and intelligence from the universe, he was left with mere conjecture. There were no facts!<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., attributing the source of the information to Rev. E. Gaynor, *New Materialism*, 106.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>23</sup> Dawkins, "Universal Darwinism," 202.

<sup>24</sup> Professor Virchow of Berlin, German authority in physiology, and the "foremost chemist on the globe," at one time a pronounced advocate of Darwin's and Haeckel's views, subsequently, in his famous lecture on "Freedom of Science," while speaking of evolution, made this statement: "It is all nonsense. It cannot be proved by science that man descends from the ape or from any other animal. Since the announcement of the theory, all real scientific knowledge has proceeded in the opposite direction" in William Bell Riley, *The Antievolution Pamphlets of William Bell Riley*, edited with an introduction by William Vance Trollinger, Jr., vol. 4 of *Creationism in Twentieth-Century America: A Ten-Volume Anthology of Documents, 1903-1961*, ed. Ronald L. Numbers (New York: Garland, 1995), 46. The same is affirmed today in Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* (Bethesda, MD: Adler & Adler, 1986), 77.

Straton, in his debates with Charles Francis Potter exposed the subjectivity of evolution by revealing that “Darwin, in his works, used such terms as ‘it may be supposed’ etc., over eight hundred times.”<sup>25</sup> The evolutionist Edward Clodd had to admit that “the absence of facts forces us to confine ourselves largely to suggestions and probabilities.”<sup>26</sup>

### **The Philosophical Basis of Evolution**

Try as it might, the “science” of evolution simply could not escape its philosophical foundations. Dawkins, realizing that he was walking on philosophical ground, tried to mitigate this reality. “This is not to say that the argument in favor of gradualism is a worthless tautology, an unfalsifiable dogma of the sort that creationists and philosophers are so fond of jumping about on,” he pleaded. “It is not *logically* impossible for a full-fashioned eye to spring *de novo* from virgin bare skin,” speaking of saltationism. “It is just that the possibility is statistically negligible.” Dawkins knew that it was “implicit in the definition of adaptive complexity that the only alternative to gradualistic evolution is supernatural magic,”<sup>27</sup> and so he sought to discredit design (sudden increases in complexity) on the basis of it being statistically negligible even though the alternative, adaptive complexity, was scientifically impossible. Dawkins had no choice but to parrot the party line that “evolution . . . must be gradual when it is being used to explain the coming into existence of complicated, apparently designed objects, like eyes.” He admitted, “If it is not gradual in these cases, it ceases to have any

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<sup>25</sup> Straton and Potter, *Evolution Versus Creation*, 51.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., quoting from *Making of a Man*, 188.

<sup>27</sup> Dawkins, “Universal Darwinism,” 210. Dawkins was rejecting saltationism – “large and sudden increments in adaptive complexity” – as an adequate explanation for evolution. He rejected supernatural creation as an impossibility and saltationism as statistically negligible. Because it was “statistically negligible” for a fully-designed eye to spring anew from an organism, gradualism was not a worthless tautology but the only possible explanation for evolution.

explanatory power at all. Without gradualness in these cases, we are back to miracle, which is simply a synonym for the total absence of explanation.”<sup>28</sup> This was true from the perspective of materialism. Having ruled out the supernatural, miracle ceased to have meaning. But it also meant defending the impossible, an even greater miracle!

What drove Dawkins to such an extreme position? The same thing that had driven evolution from Darwin forward – an a priori presupposition that the supernatural did not exist. At the center of the controversy was the philosophical belief that matter is all that there is. William McDougall, professor of psychology at Duke University, designated “as Materialism any and every attempt to extend mechanistic descriptions or explanations to all events.” It is a “view of the world and all its processes from which Mind as an active factor, a real agent or activity, is wholly excluded,” he stated. “It consists essentially in the attempt to describe and explain all processes, including those of Life and Mind, in terms of a physical science that knows nothing of Life and Mind” assuming that such a “mechanistic science can in principle achieve a complete and satisfactory account of the world and of man, his nature, origin, and destiny.”<sup>29</sup>

Theodore Graebner, professor of philosophy at Concordia Theological Seminary articulated the weakness of materialism. “Only two theories have been advanced as to how life first came on the earth: That life was created, or that natural law spontaneously quickened dead matter into life,” he wrote. “To admit to divine intervention would wreck the materialistic scheme.”<sup>30</sup> It was this either/or choice that sustained evolution in the absence of any credible evidence. “Hence Haeckel regards spontaneous generation as

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<sup>28</sup> Richard Dawkins, *River Out of Eden* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 83.

<sup>29</sup> William McDougall, *Modern Materialism and Emergent Evolution* (London: Methuen, 1929), 11-12.

<sup>30</sup> Graebner, *God and the Cosmos*, 161.

more than demonstrated by the bare consideration that no alternative remains except the unspeakable scientific blasphemy implied in superstitious terms like ‘miracle,’ ‘creation,’ and ‘supernatural.’” Continuing Haeckel’s line of reasoning Graebner pointed out, “For a ‘thinking man,’ the mere mention of these abhorrent words is, or ought to be, argument enough. ‘If we do not accept the hypothesis of spontaneous generation,’ Haeckel expostulates, ‘we must have recourse to the miracle of a supernatural creation.’”<sup>31</sup> Thus the need to deny the supernatural was the sustaining philosophy of evolution.

In the 1920s, the philosophical nature of evolution had not yet been suppressed. Perhaps this was because the term Darwinism had taken on “two very different senses: the older and better known sense in which Darwinism and the general theory of organic evolution are synonymous, and the modern technical sense in which Darwinism applies only to Darwin’s own particular causal theory . . . known as Natural Selection.” Since Darwin’s theory of Natural Selection was all but discredited, evolution appeared to be on the decline. But evidence was not driving the evolutionary hypothesis, and evolution morphed into a general theory of change. “Evolution is merely the philosophy of change as opposed to the philosophy of fixity and unchangeability,” Newman explained. “One must choose between these alternate philosophies, for there is no intermediate position; once admit a changing world and you admit the essence of evolution.”<sup>32</sup>

Who could argue with that? While Straton railed that “evolution” was “a colossal error” and an “infidel philosophy of chance and materialism,”<sup>33</sup> and Major L. M. David, addressing The Victoria Institute in May of 1926, stated, “Whether he knows it or not, the

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 161, quoting from *History of Creation*, I, 348, Lankester’s Translation, quoted by O’Toole.

<sup>32</sup> Newman, “Animal Evolution,” 165.

<sup>33</sup> Straton and Potter, *Evolution Versus Creation*, 31, 34.

average evolutionist is – so far as his belief in evolution goes – not a scientist but a philosopher,”<sup>34</sup> something strange was happening. In the absence of scientifically verifiable facts, the general theory of organic evolution became a law. “The Principle of Evolution stands in the first rank among natural laws not only in its range of applicability, but in the degree of its validity, the extent to which it may lay claim to rank as an established law. It is the one great law of life,” Newman now proclaimed, contradicting himself. “It depends for its validity, not upon conjecture or philosophy, but upon exactly the same sorts of evidence as do other laws of nature.”<sup>35</sup> And what was that evidence? It was a single broad assumption! “The entire fabric of evolutionary evidences,” Newman exhorted, “is woven about a single broad assumption: – *that fundamental structural resemblance signifies blood relationship; that, generally speaking, the closeness of structural resemblance runs essentially parallel with closeness of kinship.*” He cautioned, “If we cannot rely upon this principle we can make no sure progress toward proof of evolution.”<sup>36</sup> And just like that, Darwin’s mechanism of natural selection became the a priori principle that once again informed the now established “law” of general evolution. “In its full-throated, biological sense,” Behe revealed, “evolution means a process whereby life arose from non-living matter and subsequently developed entirely by natural means. That is the sense that Darwin gave to the word, and the meaning that it holds in the scientific community.”<sup>37</sup> It is this same meaning that the “scientific leadership cannot afford to disclose . . . frankly to the public,” law professor turned apologist Phillip E.

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<sup>34</sup> Graebner, *God and the Cosmos*, 223.

<sup>35</sup> Newman, “Animal Evolution,” 171.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 172-173.

<sup>37</sup> Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box*, xi.



Johnson revealed. “Imagine what chance the affirmative side would have if the question for public debate were rephrased candidly as “RESOLVED, that everyone should adopt an a priori commitment to materialism.”<sup>38</sup>

### **Bias in the Scientific Community**

By claiming that evolution was a fact, naturalists were attempting to hide their materialistic philosophy behind the skirt of science. And they succeeded. Naturalism had become indistinguishable from science<sup>39</sup> so much so that Richard Lewontin, professor of Genetics at Harvard, could candidly say, “We take the side of science *in spite* of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, *in spite* of its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, *in spite* of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism.”<sup>40</sup> It simply did not matter if evolution was true or not. What mattered most was that creation must not be true. “Some future day may yet arrive when all reasonable chemical experiments run to discover a probable origin for life have failed unequivocally,” Robert Shapiro wrote in *Origins: A Skeptic’s Guide to the Creation of Life on Earth*. “Further, new geological evidence may indicate a sudden appearance of life on earth,” he continued. “Finally, we may have explored the universe and found no trace of life, or processes leading to life, elsewhere.” And what did he propose might happen if the above statements were true, which many would now affirm. “In such a case, some scientists might choose to turn to religion for an answer,” he speculated. “Others,

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<sup>38</sup> Phillip E. Johnson, “The Unraveling of Scientific Materialism,” *The Schwarz Report* 44, no. 2 (February 2004), 5.

<sup>39</sup> Phillip E. Johnson, *Reason in the Balance: The Case Against Naturalism in Science, Law & Education* (Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 12.

<sup>40</sup> Richard Lewontin, “Billions and Billions of Demons,” *The New York Review* (9 January 1997), 31.

however, myself included, would attempt to sort out the surviving less probable scientific explanations in the hope of selecting one that was still more likely than the remainder.”<sup>41</sup> Amazingly, what he was not willing to do was consider the option that his commitment to materialism might be misguided.

McDougall was correct when he asserted that “if the initial assumption of Modern Materialism is false as regards both organic and inorganic nature, then all the sciences, in so far as they are mechanistic, are on a false scent and need to be radically reformed.”<sup>42</sup> But instead of searching for the truth by looking at all of the evidence, today’s science is “blind,” for “as a self-defining methodological strategy it has closed its eyes to the possibility of discerning evil or good or justice or intention.”<sup>43</sup> However, “to a person who does not feel obliged to restrict his search to unintelligent causes, the straightforward conclusion is that many biochemical systems were designed. They were designed not by the laws of nature, not by chance and necessity; rather, they were planned,” Behe acknowledged. “The designer knew what the systems would look like when they were completed, then took steps to bring the systems about. Life on earth at its most fundamental level, in its most critical components, is the product of intelligent activity.”<sup>44</sup>

Stephen C. Meyer, Senior Fellow of the Center for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle, was excoriated by the Biological Society of Washington (BSW) for publishing an article, entitled, “The Origin of Biological Information and the

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<sup>41</sup> Robert Shapiro, *Origins: A Skeptic’s Guide to the Creation of Life on Earth* (New York: Summit Books, 1986), 130.

<sup>42</sup> McDougall, *Modern Materialism*, 12.

<sup>43</sup> John Polkinghorne, *Belief in God in an Age of Science* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 12.

<sup>44</sup> Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box*, 193.

Higher Taxonomic Categories" in their peer-reviewed journal on August 4, 2004. In the article, Meyer argued that "the mechanism of natural selection acting on random mutations in DNA cannot *in principle* generate novel body plans." Arguing from the potential explanatory power of the design hypothesis, a methodology that assesses or tests "competing hypotheses by evaluating which hypothesis would, if true, provide the best explanation for some set of relevant data," Meyer suggested "that four of the most prominent models for explaining the origin of biological form fail to provide adequate causal explanations for the discontinuous increases of CSI [complex specified information] that are required to produce novel morphologies." "Yet," he added, "we have repeated experience of rational and conscious agents – in particular ourselves – generating or causing increases in complex specified information." The inevitable truth is that "experience affirms that information . . . routinely arises from the activity of intelligent agents."<sup>45</sup>

For presenting Intelligent Design in a prestigious scientific journal, Meyer was roundly criticized. Eugenie C. Scott, Executive Director of the National Center for Science Education and "a well known and ardent defender of evolutionary theory, called Dr. Meyer's article 'substandard science' and argued that the article should never have been published in any scientific journal."<sup>46</sup> The "BSW called the paper 'inappropriate for the pages of the *Proceedings*' and promised the topic of design 'will not be addressed in

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<sup>45</sup> Stephen C. Meyer, "The Origin of Biological Information and the Higher Taxonomic Categories," <http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=2177>. "Dembski (2002) has used the term 'complex specified information' (CSI) as a synonym for 'specified complexity' to help distinguish functional biological information from mere Shannon information - that is, specified complexity from mere complexity."

<sup>46</sup> Albert Mohler, "Panicked Evolutionists: The Stephen Meyer Controversy," <http://www.crosswalk.com/news/weblogs/mohler/?adate=9/15/2004#1284640>.

future issues."<sup>47</sup> Richard Sternberg, the editor of the *Proceedings*, also faced the wrath of the Darwinists. As a result of publishing Meyer's article, he claimed that he had been discriminated against by the Smithsonian Institution and threatened with the loss of his job at the National Center for Biotechnology Information, a part of the National Institutes of Health. Sternberg, "who holds two doctorates in evolutionary biology," said, "I was singled out for harassment and threats on the basis that they think I'm a creationist." Sternberg, who stepped down as managing editor of the *Proceedings*, has filed a complaint with the Office of Special Counsel. The accusation of being a "creationist" and a "religious fundamentalist" appears to be the common fate of those who dare challenge Darwinism on scientific grounds.<sup>48</sup>

But "biblical literalism is not the issue," claimed Johnson.<sup>49</sup> "The conclusion of intelligent design flows naturally from the data itself – not from sacred books or sectarian beliefs," Behe concurred. "Design is simply the purposeful arrangement of parts." So "why does the scientific community not greedily embrace its startling discovery?" Behe asked. Because of the dilemma "that while one side of the elephant is labeled intelligent design, the other side might be labeled God."<sup>50</sup> The fear of invoking God is the primary reason "Darwinism is based on an a priori commitment to materialism" and "not on a philosophically neutral assessment of the evidence," Johnson explained.<sup>51</sup> "They have set up certain hypothesis, arguing in support of which they have gone far outside the

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<sup>47</sup> Mark Bergin, "Unfashionable Genes," *World*, October 9, 2004, 28.

<sup>48</sup> Joyce Howard Price, "Researcher Claims Bias by Smithsonian," *Washington Times*, 13 February 2005, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/national/20050213-121441-8610r.htm>.

<sup>49</sup> Johnson, "The Unraveling of Scientific Materialism," 6.

<sup>50</sup> Behe, *Darwin's Black Box*, 193, 233.

<sup>51</sup> Johnson, "The Unraveling of Scientific Materialism," 6.

legitimate realm of physical science and of proof, to indulge in fanciful speculations,” Wayland-Smith stated back in 1906. “They have not demonstrated that organic life could have sprung from inorganic matter, nor can they explain on their theory the *intelligent design* which is so evident in all nature.” The fact is, “as to our knowledge of creation or the origin of life, and the orderly control of all things in the universe we are where we have always been, wholly dependent on God.”<sup>52</sup> One hundred years later, the same criticism is still being voiced. In order to deny the evidence that points to a designer, scientists have formed hypotheses from unobservable speculations in order to eliminate the unpleasant thought of the supernatural that is evident in the universe.<sup>53</sup>

Instead of showing itself rational, materialism has shown itself to be irrational! So irrational, that without any evidence, today’s scientists speak of space aliens as potential sources for life on earth. Sir Francis H. C. Crick, Nobel prize winner for deducing the double helical structure of DNA, has theorized that “life on earth may have begun when aliens from another planet sent a rocket ship containing spores to seed the earth.” Behe reported:

This is no idle thought; Crick first proposed it with chemist Leslie Orgel in 1973 in an article entitled “Directed Panspermia” in a professional science journal called *Icarus*. A decade later Crick wrote a book, *Life Itself*, reiterating the theory; in a 1992 interview in *Scientific American* on the eve of the publication of his latest book, Crick reaffirmed that he thinks the theory is reasonable.<sup>54</sup>

Now whose “science” was substandard? Those who postulated space aliens in scientific journals, or those who proposed design and were denied access?

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<sup>52</sup> Wayland-Smith, *Materialism and Christianity*, 12.

<sup>53</sup> Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box*, 244-245. Behe describes the machinations of Einstein, Hoyle, and Eddington to avoid the supernatural implications of the Big Bang theory.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 248.

Ultimately, the issue for philosophical naturalists was not about seeking the truth. It was about denying the truth. What Shailer Mathews failed to understand in 1927, when he wrote, “The substitution of scientific method for reliance upon authority is characteristic of our modern religious thought,”<sup>55</sup> was the great lengths to which materialists would go to deny his God. He gave up the authority of the Bible for the authority of a “scientific method” that excluded any evidence that pointed to a supreme being, and in the process, gave away his God to idle speculation. Charles Hodge realized this and therefore said of creation, “The truth of this theory of the universe rests, in the first place, so far as it has been correctly stated, on the infallible authority of the Word of God.”<sup>56</sup> Hodge understood the choice. Either God’s Word was consistent with the natural laws of nature and design, and could be trusted, or evolution was true and the Scriptures a sham. He could either believe that life was the result of random, mindless chance, or believe with the prophet Zechariah that it was God who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundation of the earth.<sup>57</sup> Since the religious elites had sided with the evolutionists, it was up to the fundamentalists to prove the uniqueness of the Bible and preserve its authority.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Shailer Mathews, *Contributions of Science to Religion* (New York: Appleton, 1927), 381.

<sup>56</sup> Hodge, *What is Darwinism?*, 5.

<sup>57</sup> Zechariah 12:1

<sup>58</sup> Riley cites Crawford H. Toy, George Burman Foster, B. Fay Mills, Charles Aked and R. J. Campbell as examples of religious leaders who, upon adopting the evolutionary theory, “immediately begin to treat the Word of God as though it were without authority” in Riley, “Antievolution Pamphlets,” 51.

## FOUR

### THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

What a dreadfully erroneous thing it is to say merely that the Bible  
*contains* the Word of God. No, it *is* the Word of God.<sup>1</sup>

– J. Gresham Machen

For fundamentalists, the Bible did not contain the Word of God, it was the Word of God. Any attempt to diminish the inspiration<sup>2</sup> and inerrancy<sup>3</sup> of Scripture was met head on. J. Gresham Machen, famous radio personality and former Princeton professor

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<sup>1</sup> J. Gresham Machen, *The Christian Faith in the Modern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1936), 58.

<sup>2</sup> Inspiration meant that the biblical writers were carried along by the Holy Spirit to write what God wanted them to write, yet not in a mechanical way, but according to their personalities, backgrounds and experiences (2 Peter 1:21). “Verbal” meant that the inspiration of God extended to the very words chosen by the writers. “Plenary” conveyed the idea that the inspiration extended to all of Scripture. Thus, fundamentalists spoke in terms of the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible, whereby they meant that God, working through human means, was the author of all of the Scriptures including not only the thoughts and ideas but the very words.

<sup>3</sup> Inerrancy meant that the Old and New Testaments were written without error in the original manuscripts and was therefore truthful in all that they affirmed. This was the position held by the early fundamentalists. Only later were the following positions developed. In contrast to “absolute” inerrancy which interpreted scientific and historical data with technical precision; or “limited” inerrancy which understood the scientific and historical data to be the current and fallible reflections of the writers; “full” inerrancy accounted for the scientific and historical assertions as fully true when understood to be phenomenal and not technical. Phenomenal references are popular descriptions of how things appear to the human eye and are not necessarily exact. Full inerrancy asserts that the Bible is fully truthful in all that it affirms, including scientific and historical data when interpreted in light of what is affirmed and not merely reported, when interpreted in light of culture (symbolism or special meanings to words like “sons”), when interpreted in light of its purpose (approximations vs. exact numbers), when interpreted by phenomenal language rather than technical language (sunrise and sunset), and when difficulties in explaining the text are not prejudged as indications of errors in Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), 222, 234-237.

and founder of Westminster Theological Seminary took to the airwaves to defend the Bible from those who were attacking it. "I hold that the Biblical writers, after having been prepared for their task by the providential ordering of their entire lives, received, in addition to all that, a blessed and wonderful and supernatural guidance and impulsion by the Spirit of God," he said, "so that they were preserved from the errors that appear in other books and thus the resulting book, the Bible, is in all its parts the very Word of God, completely true in what it says regarding matters of fact and completely authoritative in its commands."<sup>4</sup>

### **The Extent of Inspiration and Authority**

By saying "matters of fact" and not "faith," Machen left no doubt as to where he stood. The Bible was authoritative because it was factually true, and not just in areas of faith, but in science and history as well! "What do you think of the Bible when it tells you that the body of the Lord Jesus came out of the tomb on the first Easter morning nineteen hundred years ago?" he questioned. "Is this history? Is it science? Is it myth? Is it true?" He persisted, "It is certainly a matter with which science, in principle, must deal." Machen's point was that it was impossible to separate the authoritative truth claims of Scripture from history and science. To deny the resurrection of Christ on scientific grounds meant that one also had to deny the historic fact of the resurrection. The Bible, purporting to be true, would instead be a myth. "If it is not true historically or scientifically," Machen reasoned, "then it is useless to me for 'religion.'"<sup>5</sup> If the Bible

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<sup>4</sup> Machen, *Christian Faith*, 36-37.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 55, 56.



contained errors in history or science, the Bible would lose its sacred appeal to authority,<sup>6</sup> and become just another book.<sup>7</sup>

John Roach Straton in his debates with Charles Francis Potter pointed out that the Bible was not “just like any other book.” He referred to it as a “library of 66 books composed by 40 different writers from all ranks of society, and requiring 1,500 years in its composition” and yet “one mind inspired the whole Book!” Perhaps the most “striking fact” that mandated this conclusion was the Bible’s fulfilled prophecies.<sup>8</sup> Referring to Isaiah 53, a chapter of Scripture that had long been linked to the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus, William Paley in *Evidences of Christianity* wrote, “That material part of every argument from prophecy, namely, that the words alleged were actually spoken or written before the fact to which they are applied took place, or could by any natural means be foreseen, is, in the present instance; incontestable.” It seemed inconceivable to those who believed in a supernatural Bible that anyone could reject the evidence of Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah that predated the life of Jesus of Nazareth, especially when the evidence was preserved by the adversaries of Christ. “The Jews, as an ancient father well observed, are our librarians,” Paley noted. “The passage is in their copies, as well as in ours. With many attempts to explain it away,

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<sup>6</sup> Machen was countering the faulty view of conservatives like Augustus H. Strong who allowed for “imperfections” in the text of the Bible. Having accepted the view that the Bible “has grown up in ways analogous to those in which other literatures have originated,” Strong argued that “Christ is the ultimate authority, not the Church or the Bible.” Strong’s views represented a growing majority of theologians who maintained that the Bible was not intended to teach “physical science or secular history.” Strong realized that in adopting the new methods, the danger of divesting “the Bible of all authority” was a distinct possibility in *Our Denominational Outlook* (n.p., 1904), 20.

<sup>7</sup> George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 205, 243.

<sup>8</sup> John Roach Straton and Charles Francis Potter, *The Battle over the Bible: First in the Series of Fundamentalist-Modernists Debates* (New York: Doran, 1924), 23-25.

none has ever been made by them to discredit its authenticity.” He added, “The application of the prophecy to the evangelic history is plain and appropriate.”<sup>9</sup>

In 1953, Peter W. Stoner isolated the following eight prophecies concerning Jesus from among the more than 48 that are now applied to him: he would be born in Bethlehem; be preceded by a messenger; enter Jerusalem on a donkey; be betrayed by a friend for thirty pieces of silver; the silver would be thrown into the house of the LORD for the potter; he would remain silent before his accusers; his hands and feet would be pierced; he would be crucified with thieves. Using the science of probability, Stoner suggested that the odds of all eight of these prophecies being fulfilled in any one person was 1 in 10 to the 17th power. “This means that the fulfillment of these eight prophecies alone proves that God inspired the writing of those prophecies to a definiteness which lacks only one chance in 10 to the 17th power of being absolute,” Stoner explained. The chance of all 48 prophecies being fulfilled in any one man was 1 in 10 to the 157th power,<sup>10</sup> a probability that Dr. Emile Borel, founder of the laws of probability, believed to be impossible.<sup>11</sup>

Anyone who has attempted to predict the future knows what a difficult task that can be. “In the 18th century the great French infidel, Voltaire, prophesied that, within a hundred years from the time when he wrote, the Bible would be an obsolete book,” Straton exclaimed. “He declared that it would go entirely out of circulation.” Instead, the

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<sup>9</sup> William Paley, *Evidences of Christianity* (New York: S. King, 1824), 206-207. Special collections and Archives Department of Auburn University.

<sup>10</sup> Peter W. Stoner, *Science Speaks: an Evaluation of Certain Christian Evidences* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1963 [1953]), 100-107, cited in Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1999), 193-194.

<sup>11</sup> Anything beyond 1 in 10 to the 50th power is considered to be impossible in "The Theory of Evolution: The Great Myth," <http://www.myfortress.org/evolution.html>.

very house where Voltaire wrote his prediction is now “owned and used as a storehouse” for Bibles by the French Bible Society. Despite many attempts through the years to eradicate the Bible from existence, its “preservation and increase” was just one more example of God’s providential oversight.<sup>12</sup> No other book has been more well-attested as to the number of ancient manuscripts<sup>13</sup> or to current circulation.<sup>14</sup>

While none of this evidence proved that the Bible was inspired, it did show that it was unique. Ultimately, the highest authority claiming “inspiration” for the Bible was the Bible itself. “To be sure,” Straton said, “[the Bible] does not elaborate any formal theory of inspiration or infallibility, and yet inspiration and infallibility are implied from one end of it to the other.”<sup>15</sup> Citing five pertinent passages that spoke to the Bible’s inspiration,<sup>16</sup> Straton articulated “the fact of the Bible’s self-authenticating authority.”<sup>17</sup> Though this assertion appeared to be circular in reasoning, Wayne Grudem has confirmed that “this is what the Bible claims for itself.”<sup>18</sup> The use of a circular argument, Grudem argued, is valid in cases dealing with absolute authority, “for all arguments for an absolute authority must ultimately appeal to that authority for proof: otherwise the authority would not be an

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<sup>12</sup> Straton and Potter, *The Battle over the Bible*, 16.

<sup>13</sup> Paley, *Evidences of Christianity*, 109. While Homer’s *Iliad* has 643 copies, Herodotus’ *History* 8 copies, Caesar’s *Gallic Wars* 10 copies, and Tacitus’ *Annals* 20 copies; the New Testament has 5,366 copies in McDowell, *The New Evidence*, 38.

<sup>14</sup> McDowell, *The New Evidence*, 8. The circulation of the Bible reaches into the billions.

<sup>15</sup> Straton and Potter, *The Battle over the Bible*, 33. The infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible has been the position of the early church fathers down to today’s conservative evangelicals in John D. Woodbridge, *Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982), 31-140 passim.

<sup>16</sup> 1 Thessalonians 2:13, Ephesians 3:5, 2 Peter 3:15-16, 2 Peter 1:21, Matthew 10:20.

<sup>17</sup> Straton and Potter, *The Battle for the Bible*, 36.

<sup>18</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 73.

absolute or highest authority.”<sup>19</sup> Straton was right, therefore, to drive this fact home in reference to infallibility. “If it is argued that the Bible is fallible in part,” he probed, “then the question arises: ‘What part is fallible and what part is infallible? What part is true and what part is false? And who is to be the judge?’”<sup>20</sup>

The religious elites were only too happy to sit as judge, and they rejoiced in their new found authority. Religious leaders, like Charles A. Dinsmore, pastor of the First Congregational Church in Waterbury, Connecticut and professor at Yale Divinity School cut across his own heritage when he wrote, “The spirit of science working upon the documents of our faith has given us a new Bible, immeasurably more human, significant, and real than that which the first settler brought to these shores.” Denying the “plenary inspiration of the scriptures” – the belief that every word of the Bible is completely and fully inspired by God, Dinsmore rejected the orthodox beliefs of his forbears. “Grown wise by the experience of the past, and thoroughly imbued with the scientific spirit,” he exalted, “our leading thinkers in the religious world do not assume some broad generalization, such as the fall of man, or the sovereign decrees of the Almighty, upon which to build imposing systems of thought.”<sup>21</sup> Harry Emerson Fosdick came to the same conclusion. He denied the resurrection of believers, the physical return of Jesus to earth, the visitation of demons, and the protection of angels. Yet he claimed he still believed in

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 78-79. Grudem argues that “this problem is not unique to the Christian who is arguing for the authority of the Bible.” He cites several examples along the line of: “My reason is my ultimate authority because it seems reasonable to me to make it so” or “I know there can be no ultimate authority because I do not know of any such ultimate authority.” He argues that these “circular arguments are not always made explicit and are sometimes hidden beneath lengthy discussions or are simply assumed without proof.”

<sup>20</sup> Straton and Potter, *The Battle for the Bible*, 39.

<sup>21</sup> Charles A. Dinsmore, “Two Kinds of Knowledge,” *Controversy in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Evolution*, William B. Gatewood, Jr., ed., (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), 209, excerpts from *Religious Certitude in an Age of Science* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1924), 20-24, 28-29, 31-35, 89-91, 100-102.

the immortality of the soul, the victory of God on earth, the reality of sin and evil, and the nearness and friendship of the divine Spirit. Despite picking through the Bible, choosing what he decided was worth keeping, and tossing out the rest, he protested, “only superficial dogmatism can deny that that man believes the Bible.”<sup>22</sup>

Unlike the modernists, the fundamentalists understood that the authority of the Bible was an all or nothing proposition. “Once you subject that authority to the test of human reason you have denied the essence of its authority,” reasoned the fundamentalists. “You have made the finite understanding the judge of the infinite.”<sup>23</sup> In the face of this affront, Straton simply pointed folks back to the Bible. “Christianity is a religion founded on definite historical facts,” he said. “These facts – including the creation of the world, and the creation, fall and salvation of man – are recorded in the Bible.”<sup>24</sup> From these facts, William Bell Riley was able to articulate the faith of the fundamentalists:

1. We believe in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired by God, and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life.
2. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man.
4. We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also that spiritual death which is from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and, in the case of those who reached moral responsibility, become sinners in thought, word, and deed.

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<sup>22</sup> Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Modern Use of the Bible* (New York: Macmillan, 1924), 127.

<sup>23</sup> Walter Lippmann, *American Inquisitors: A Commentary on Dayton and Chicago* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), 65. By human reason, Lippmann is referring to historicism and higher criticism.

<sup>24</sup> John Roach Straton and Charles Francis Potter, *Evolution Versus Creation: Second in the Series of Fundamentalist-Modernist Debates* (New York: Doran, 1924), 35.

5. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures as a representative and substitution sacrifice; and that all that believe in him are justified on the ground of his shed blood.
6. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in his ascension into Heaven, and in his present life there for us, as High Priest and Advocate.
7. We believe in “that blessed hope,” the personal, premillennial, and imminent return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
8. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God.
9. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting felicity of the saved, and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost.<sup>25</sup>

For fundamentalists, what God said in his Word was paramount. And it must be trustworthy. If the Bible was not infallible in regards to science or history, then none of the above statements could be deemed reliable either. “Regardless of the purpose of the Bible, it is the Word of God. This being so, errors of any kind would be inexcusable,” Harry Rimmer expounded in *The Harmony of Science and Scripture*. “In a book that owed its origin and authority to the perfect knowledge of Deity, no error of any kind could be admissible. Regardless of the reason for the writing, Almighty God knew the facts in all cases. Therefore, if errors of science are found in the Bible,” Rimmer reasoned, “its claims to inspiration are proved false and its divine authority has been disproved.”<sup>26</sup> But if it was infallible, then it must also be authoritative in all that it

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<sup>25</sup> William Bell Riley, “The Faith of the Fundamentalists,” *Current History* XXVI (June 1927): 434-436, compiled in Gatewood, Jr., ed., *Controversy in the Twenties*, 74-75.

<sup>26</sup> Harry Rimmer, *The Harmony of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1936), 56.

affirmed. The “supernatural work of the Spirit of God extends to all parts of the Bible,” Machen explained, including statements regarding “history” and “science.”<sup>27</sup>

### **Science in the Bible**

For proof that the Bible was supernaturally inspired, the fundamentalists cited scientific statements in Scripture that predated their discovery by modern science. The ancient Egyptians, for example, “believed that the earth had hatched from a winged egg, which flew around in space until the process of mitosis was completed and the earth emerged from that flying ovoid.”<sup>28</sup> But Darwinists like Stephen Hawking affirmed that “almost everyone now believes that the universe and time itself had a beginning at the Big Bang.”<sup>29</sup> Fred Hoyle, the Cambridge astronomer, explained that “if we go far enough back into the past,” we reach a point in time at which the universe was “shrunk down to nothing at all.”<sup>30</sup> Thus, the Big Bang model requires “that the universe began to exist and was created out of nothing.”<sup>31</sup> Charles Townes, the 1964 Nobel prize winner in physics, in an interview with the Los Angeles Times in 1996 stated that before the 1960s, the Big Bang was just an idea that was hotly debated. Today, there is so much evidence supporting the theory that most cosmologists take it for granted.<sup>32</sup> Yet 3500 years ago the

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<sup>27</sup> Machen, *The Christian Faith*, 54-55.

<sup>28</sup> Rimmer, *Harmony*, 64.

<sup>29</sup> Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, *The Nature of Space and Time*, The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 20, quoted in William Lane Craig and Edwin Curley, *The Craig-Curley Debate: The Existence of the Christian God*, with annotations by William Lane Craig (5 February 1998) University of Michigan, [www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/craig-curley00.html](http://www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/craig-curley00.html).

<sup>30</sup> Fred Hoyle, *Astronomy and Cosmology: A Modern Course* (San Francisco: Freeman, 1975), 658.

<sup>31</sup> Craig and Curley, *Debate*.

<sup>32</sup> Larry B. Stammer, “Physicist Wins Spirituality Prize,” Los Angeles Times, 10 March 2005, [http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=2026&u=latimes/20050310/ts\\_latimes/ph](http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=2026&u=latimes/20050310/ts_latimes/ph).

Bible elegantly revealed, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."<sup>33</sup> The Hebrew word for "created" is "bara." H. C. Leupold in his commentary on Genesis, published in 1942, stated, "This verb is correctly defined as expressing the origination of something great, new and 'epoch-making.'" He added, "When no existing material is mentioned as to be worked over, no such material is implied. Consequently, this passage teaches *creatio ex nihilo*, 'creation out of nothing.'"<sup>34</sup> The Bible also speaks of time having a beginning. The Apostle Paul in his letter to Titus spoke of a "faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time."<sup>35</sup> Thus many scientists now agree with the Bible that the universe and time had a beginning!

The Egyptians also believed that "the earth was supported by five great pillars, one under each corner and one in the middle." In Greek legend, Atlas was "bearing the earth on his neck and shoulders." Meanwhile, the Hindus believed that the earth was "balanced on the back of a gigantic elephant" which in turn was "standing on an immense turtle" that was "swimming in a cosmic sea."<sup>36</sup> Shailer Mathews boldly proclaimed in 1924, "At the risk of too confident a statement, it would seem that the ether, the existence of which is as yet the commonly accepted working hypothesis, has within itself vortices or undulations which constitute atoms."<sup>37</sup> Mathews confidently believed that ether was the substance that filled all space and supported the planets in their orbits. In this belief he

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<sup>33</sup> Genesis 1:1 (NIV)

<sup>34</sup> H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1942), 40-41.

<sup>35</sup> Titus 1:2

<sup>36</sup> Rimmer, *Harmony*, 92-23.

<sup>37</sup> Shailer Mathews, *Contributions of Science to Religion* (New York: Appleton, 1924), 391-392.



was no more accurate than the ancients. But the Scriptures, Rimmer revealed, precisely state that God "hangs the earth on nothing."<sup>38</sup>

Skeptics like Clarence Darrow were fond of saying that the Bible taught that the earth was flat. While Darrow claimed that the book of Genesis taught this, it was actually alleged from Isaiah 11:12, which spoke poetically of the "four corners of the earth" (KJV). But the Hebrew text, Rimmer explained, was better rendered the "four quarters of the earth,"<sup>39</sup> which is how the New International Version has translated it. While the ancients "may" have thought that the earth was flat,<sup>40</sup> the Bible spoke of God drawing "a circular horizon on the face of the waters" and of sitting "above the circle of the earth,"<sup>41</sup> clear references to the phenomenological<sup>42</sup> observation of the circular horizon and round earth.

In 1643, Evangelista Torricelli, Gallileo's secretary and scientific successor, proved not only the existence of a vacuum, but discovered air pressure. Realizing "that air – contrary to contemporary thought – was not weightless," he devised an experiment using liquid mercury to demonstrate his findings.<sup>43</sup> Yet thousands of years earlier, the

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<sup>38</sup> Rimmer, *Harmony*, 92-93. Job 26:7 (NASB, updated edition)

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 75-77.

<sup>40</sup> It has been shown that the "flat earth" concept was invented by anti-Christians in Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Inventing the Flat Earth: Columbus and Modern Historians* (New York: Praeger, 1991). Russell alleges that the lie of the "flat earth" was perpetuated by Darwinists to attack the credibility of the creationists in <http://id-www.ucsb.edu/fscf/library/RUSSELL/FlatEarth.html>. Russell asserts that as early as the sixth century BC Pythagoras was advocating a round earth. The quotes from the Bible predate Pythagoras by hundreds of years.

<sup>41</sup> Job 26:10 (NKJV), Isaiah 40:22 (NIV)

<sup>42</sup> The appearance of the universe as it looks to one standing on the earth and looking above and about as opposed to scientific observations which assume a perspective from beyond the earth. Both are legitimate expressions in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), #615. An example in use today is "sunrise and sunset" in Ecclesiastes 1:5.

<sup>43</sup> "Barometric Pressure," <http://www.hometrainingtools.com/articles/barometric-pressure-teaching-tip.html>.

Bible recorded that God made “the weight for the winds.”<sup>44</sup> During World War II, the jet stream was discovered, when pilots crossing the Atlantic encountered tailwinds up to 150 mph.<sup>45</sup> As a result of satellite imaging, we know that this wind current makes a continuous loop around the earth. The Bible, however, recorded this fact 3000 years ago. “The wind blows to the south and turns to the north, round and round it goes, ever returning on its course.”<sup>46</sup> But King Solomon did not stop there. He went on to explain the hydrological cycle, which is now the standard model for understanding the circulation and conservation of the earth's water. Today, scientists have concluded that the “total amount of the earth's water does not change.”<sup>47</sup> Solomon simply explained, “All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again.”<sup>48</sup>

When Ptolemy charted the heavens, he “catalogued 1022 stars grouped in 48 different constellations.”<sup>49</sup> Nothing, at that time, could have been more absurd than the claims of Scripture concerning the descendants of David being “as countless as the stars of the sky and as measureless as the sand on the seashore.”<sup>50</sup> No doubt many considered this verse comparing the number of stars to sand on the seashore a blatant error. That this error was compounded in more than one place in the Bible, including the New Testament, rendered the whole Bible suspect and fodder for ridicule. Imagine, therefore, Gallileo's surprise when he looked through his first telescope in 1609 and saw not a thousand stars,

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<sup>44</sup> Job 28:25 (KJV)

<sup>45</sup> “The Jet Stream,” [http://www.challenger.virgin.net/Content/Route\\_jet.htm](http://www.challenger.virgin.net/Content/Route_jet.htm).

<sup>46</sup> Ecclesiastes 1:6 (NIV)

<sup>47</sup> “The Hydrologic Cycle,” [http://ww2010.atmos.uiuc.edu/\(Gh\)/guides/mtr/hyd/home.rxml](http://ww2010.atmos.uiuc.edu/(Gh)/guides/mtr/hyd/home.rxml).

<sup>48</sup> Rimmer, *Harmony*, 95. Ecclesiastes 1:7 (NIV)

<sup>49</sup> “Ptolemy,” <http://library.thinkquest.org/29033/history/ptolemy.htm>.

<sup>50</sup> Jeremiah 33:22 (NIV), Genesis 15:5, Hebrews 11:12

but thousands of stars! Today, the total number of stars in the known universe, according to a study done by Australian astronomers, is 70 sextillion. That is a seven followed by 22 zeros! "It's also about 10 times as many stars as grains of sand on all the world's beaches and deserts," the report added, with the possibility that "there were likely many million more stars in the universe."<sup>51</sup> Looked at differently, the Sun is one of at least 100 billion stars in our galaxy. And there are billions of galaxies in the universe! The stars really do approximate the grains of sand on the seashore and both are countless and measureless! The numbers are staggering, but the Bible was correct.

S. I. McMillen, noted medical doctor and missionary with the Wesleyan Methodist Church, recorded the heart-breaking story of Ignaz Semmelweis in his book *None of These Diseases*. In Vienna in the 1840s, Semmelweis noticed that one out of six women died in the maternity ward of the famous teaching hospital, Allgemeines Krankenhaus. "The obstetricians ascribed the deaths to constipation, delayed lactation, fear and poisonous air," but Semmelweis observed something else. Each day, the physicians and medical students would perform autopsies on the dead women. Then, without washing their hands, they would perform pelvic examinations on the pregnant women in the maternity ward. Semmelweis noted that "it was particularly the women who were examined by the teachers and students who became sick and died." Finally, after three years, Semmelweis ordered that every physician and medical student who performed morning autopsies must wash his hands before examining the living patients. The results were phenomenal. In April of 1847, 57 women died. In June, only one out of

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<sup>51</sup> "Star Survey Reaches 70 Sextillion," <http://cnn.com/2003/TECH/space/07/22/stars.survey/index.html>.

every 42 women died. In July that ratio fell to one out of 84. “The statistics strongly indicated that fatal infections had been carried from corpses to living patients.” When eleven of twelve living patients developed temperatures and died, Semmelweis ordered that everyone must wash his hands carefully after examining each living patient. Despite the drop in mortality, his fellow colleagues protested the nuisance of having to wash their hands. Scorned and belittled, Semmelweis’ contract was not renewed. His successor threw out the wash basins and the mortality rate shot back up. Semmelweis wrote a book documenting his work, but what he had discovered was previously recorded by Moses 3500 years earlier. In 1960 the New York State Department of Health issued a book describing a method of washing the hands that closely approximated the Scriptural method given in Numbers 19. The biblical method included running water, time intervals for drying, and exposure to the sun to kill bacteria not washed off.<sup>52</sup>

These and many other examples were recorded in the Bible and documented by Rimmer, Riley, Straton and others; everything from an understanding that “the life is in the blood,”<sup>53</sup> which was not proven until William Harvey documented the circulatory system in 1628, to “quarantine” for infectious diseases, which broke the black plague in 14th century Europe when the church leaders, not the scientists, rediscovered Leviticus 13:46.<sup>54</sup> “Such instances of Scripture statement preceding scientific discoveries could be

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<sup>52</sup> S. I. McMillen, *None of These Diseases* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1963), 16-18. Leviticus 15:13

<sup>53</sup> Rimmer, *Harmony*, 113. Genesis 9:4 (NIV), Leviticus 17:11

<sup>54</sup> Grant R. Jeffrey, *The Signature of God: Astonishing Biblical Discoveries* (Toronto, Ontario: Frontier Research Publications, 1996), 148-49.

multiplied out of number,” Riley asserted. “*It is high time Pseudo-Scientists surrendered their skepticism.*”<sup>55</sup>

### **The Compatibility of the Bible and Science**

The religious elites were fond of attacking the credibility of the Bible based on alleged scientific inaccuracies. "With monotonous regularity," Kirtley Mather argued, "the world discovers that science is right, that theology is wrong."<sup>56</sup> Riley observed, however, that when "liberals have a conflict of science and scripture, they automatically dismiss scripture for science. Not because science has been proven true, but simply because they hold it to be a higher authority than the Bible."<sup>57</sup> Straton added, "They dogmatize, too, not on the authority of a Divine revelation that has justified its claim for centuries, but only on their own hypotheses, theories and beliefs of what they think ought to be right."<sup>58</sup>

The real issue was the detachment of the book of nature from the book of Scripture, often referred to as general revelation and special revelation by theologians.<sup>59</sup> The fundamentalists continued to hold to the view handed down by the Puritans<sup>60</sup> and revealed in Scripture.<sup>61</sup> "There is a two-fold revelation of God spread out in majestic array before every inquirer of our generation. The first and the simplest of those

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<sup>55</sup> Riley, *Antievolution Pamphlets*, 24-25.

<sup>56</sup> Kirtley Mather, *Science in Search of God* (New York: Holt, 1928), 33.

<sup>57</sup> Riley, *Antievolution Pamphlets*, 10

<sup>58</sup> Straton and Potter, *The Battle over the Bible*, 21.

<sup>59</sup> Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 153, 175.

<sup>60</sup> The Puritans believed "relating faith and science was a matter of relating two approaches to universal truth" within the dogmatic context of their theological tradition. "The truths learned from Scripture and those learned from nature were assumed to be complementary." "The principal issue in the seventeenth century was not natural science versus the Bible; rather it was the new natural philosophy versus the 'peripatetic' philosophy of Aristotle" in Marsden, *Soul*, 50, 48. It was science versus science!

<sup>61</sup> Romans 1, Psalm 19:1

revelations is in the realm that men call nature," Rimmer noted. The second form of revelation was the "written revelation that came to men by direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that deserves the highest place in the thinking of men today." The book of revelation was the supreme authority, not nature. "This modern craze to test Scripture by science, however would reverse the natural order," Rimmer exclaimed. "When science is grown up and has achieved its majority, and has demonstrated its own infallibility, we may then be ready to test the Bible by science." Rimmer was not afraid to test the Bible, he simply was not willing to subject the Bible to unproven hypotheses. "If the Bible is true and if its revelations are indeed from Almighty God, we need not fear to have it tested by any standard of truth that is honest, and that is established." Rimmer's point was that religious liberals and modernists were quick to "surrender the eternal verity of God's revelation for the unfounded theories propounded by men who are utterly without ability to prove their wild imaginings." Rimmer countered, "Only a science that is free from error will agree with a true and accurate rendition of the text of the Bible."<sup>62</sup>

That was the key. In order for science and the Bible to be compatible, both would need to be interpreted correctly. Science would need to maintain a view of nature that did not exclude the spiritual. "By nature we here mean not only physical facts, or facts with regard to the substances, properties, forces, and laws of the material world," stated the venerable Baptist theologian Augustus H. Strong, "but also spiritual facts, or facts with regard to the intellectual and moral constitution of man, and the orderly arrangement of

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<sup>62</sup> Rimmer, *Harmony*, 35, 48, 59, 12, 12, 56.

human society and history.”<sup>63</sup> John Polkinghorne clarified, “At the heart of scientific realism lies the conviction that intelligibility is the reliable guide to ontology; that concepts and entities whose postulation enables us to make sense of wide swathes of experience, are to be taken with the utmost seriousness as candidate descriptions of what is actually the case.”<sup>64</sup> Likewise, the Scriptures would also need to be interpreted correctly according to the original languages in order to discern its grammatical and historical intent. If the Bible was divinely inspired, then knowing the ancient languages was of utmost importance in discerning its meaning.<sup>65</sup> When all of the facts from both science and Scripture are understood, there can be “no final conflict.”<sup>66</sup> “The true interpretation of the Bible together with the true interpretation of science will result in perfect harmony, repeat, *perfect harmony* with no disservice to either,” stated Gorman Gray in *The Age of the Universe*.<sup>67</sup>

When it came to cosmology, misinterpreting the Scriptures was a problem that applied not only to the religious elites and atheists, but also to the fundamentalists. Fosdick continued to mischaracterize the Bible’s view on creation when he stated, “On

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<sup>63</sup> Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1907), 26.

<sup>64</sup> John Polkinghorne, *Belief in God in an Age of Science* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 109. Polkinghorne in describing the book of Scripture and the book of nature gives more credence to nature. He labels Genesis 3 a “powerful tale” and understands it “mythically” (88). He embraces evolution and the “hominid lines leading eventually to Homo sapiens” (89). He speculates how the fall happened instead of accepting the biblical record. Polkinghorne’s conclusions illustrate the penchant of accepting the faulty reading of the book of nature over the supernatural revelation of the book of Scripture.

<sup>65</sup> Fundamental and evangelical seminaries that hold to a high view of Scripture continue to require their students to study Hebrew and Greek, whereas many liberal seminaries that no longer hold to the historic position in regards to the inspiration and authority of the Bible have reduced or eliminated the “language” requirements in their degree programs.

<sup>66</sup> Francis Schaeffer, *No Final Conflict* (Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1975), quoted in Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 274.

<sup>67</sup> Gorman Gray, *The Age of the Universe: What are the Biblical Limits* (Washougal, WA: Morning Star, 2000), 31.

the one side is the Semitic world-view with its flat earth surrounded by the sea, and the solid firmament a little way above; on the other our modern universe of immeasurable distances.”<sup>68</sup> Huxley charged “Moses with believing that heaven was a solid substance, resting like a canopy over the earth.”<sup>69</sup> Fundamentalists who were strict literalists believed “that God created all terrestrial life – past and present – less than ten thousand years ago”<sup>70</sup> claiming in the process that God didn’t create the sun, moon, and stars until day four of the creation account.<sup>71</sup> Still others, who agreed with “geologists that the earth was far older than six thousand years” advocated the Gap Theory, which postulated that “most fossils were relics of the first creation, destroyed by God prior to the Adamic restoration.”<sup>72</sup> Theistic evolutionists “went still further to accommodate science by interpreting the days of Genesis as ages and by correlating them with successive epochs in the natural history of the world.” By the late 1800s theistic evolution “circulated widely in the colleges and seminaries of America.”<sup>73</sup> But with the publication of *The Genesis Flood* in 1961 by John C. Whitcomb, Jr. and Henry M. Morris, young earth creationism made a tremendous comeback in fundamentalist and evangelical circles.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Fosdick, *Modern Use of the Bible*, 44.

<sup>69</sup> Riley, *Antievolution Pamphlets*, 14.

<sup>70</sup> Ronald L. Numbers, “The Creationists,” *But Is It Science?*, ed. Ruse, 228.

<sup>71</sup> John C. Whitcomb, Jr. and Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood: The Biblical Record and Its Scientific Implications* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961), 228. Shailer Mathews in rejecting the inerrancy of the Bible stated, “Our knowledge of astronomy makes it impossible for us to think that day and night existed before the sun was created,” a clear reference to the interpretation of biblical literalists in regards to day four of the creation week in *The Faith of Modernism*, 142.

<sup>72</sup> Numbers, “The Creationists,” 228.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 229. “Scientists were discarding Darwinism at the turn of the century, but not evolution. This was misunderstood by emerging fundamentalists, who thought evolution was collapsing. *The Fundamentals* barely addressed the threat of evolution” in *ibid.*, 230.

<sup>74</sup> The belief that the Bible teaches that the universe was created in six literal days approximately six to ten thousand years ago.



Morris “concluded that creation had taken place in six literal days, because the Bible clearly said so and ‘God doesn’t lie.’”<sup>75</sup>

But in each case, either science or the Scriptures were being distorted. Fosdick either ignored or was unaware of the passages in the Bible that referred to the earth as a circle or sphere. He also failed to understand, as did many fundamentalists, that “the heavens and the earth” was a reference to the universe and all its “host,” meaning sun, moon, stars, and planets.<sup>76</sup> Therefore Genesis 1:1 was a description of a functioning universe and not “‘interstellar space’ with no celestial bodies,” an error that led to the misinterpretation of day four by the strict literalists.<sup>77</sup> “This is significant,” Riley explained. “First of all the word ‘made’ is not ‘bara’ – which implies a creative act, but ‘asa’ – a Hebrew word that suggests appointment to function. There is, therefore, no harmony between Genesis 1:1 where God created the heavens and 1:16 where He appointed the sun and the moon ‘to rule over the day and over the night.’”<sup>78</sup> This mistake was probably the most significant error made by young earth creationists and later fundamentalists. It completely distorted their understanding of Genesis 1:1 and led to the argument that this verse was a summary statement or heading and not the actual description of God creating out of nothing a fully formed universe.<sup>79</sup> In arguing for a young universe, they also contradicted what astronomers know to be true concerning the speed of light and the time it takes for light from distant solar systems to reach the earth’s

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<sup>75</sup> Numbers, “The Creationists,” 242, from interviews with Henry M. Morris, 26 October 1980 and 6 January 1981.

<sup>76</sup> Psalm 33:6, Isaiah 40:26. In asking the question, “Who created all these *stars*?” the verb “bara” was used connecting it to Genesis 1:1 (bara) and not Genesis 1:16 (asa).

<sup>77</sup> Gray, *Age of the Universe*, 36.

<sup>78</sup> Riley, *Antievolution Pamphlets*, 18.

<sup>79</sup> Gray, *Age of the Universe*, 43.

atmosphere.<sup>80</sup> Contrary to Fosdick, the expansiveness of the universe was indicated by the biblical phrase, “he alone stretches out the heavens.”<sup>81</sup> Huxley simply got it wrong, Riley pointed out, when he failed to understand that the Hebrew word “rakiah” correctly translated means “a broad expanse” and not a solid substance.<sup>82</sup> Used in the context of day two of the creation story, “rakiah” referred to the “sky” that was formed when the waters were separated.<sup>83</sup> Gap theorists, in proposing a previous creation on earth that accounted for science’s alleged “preadamic races”<sup>84</sup> contradicted the claims of the Bible that there was no human death on the earth until after the fall of Adam and Eve.<sup>85</sup> And the Day-Age theory did disservice to the normal understanding of the Hebrew text, that the days were literal 24 hour days.<sup>86</sup>

In attempting to reconcile cosmology with the Bible and science, it appeared that there were only two options to choose from for those who take both the Bible and science seriously. Either believe with old earth creationists, who claimed to have science on their side, that the earth was 4.5 billion years old; or believe with young earth creationists, who claimed to have the Bible on their side, that the earth was only 10,000 to 20,000 years old.<sup>87</sup> In considering the above attempts to harmonize science and the Bible, Gray wrote, "either science is bent to suit an interpretation of Scripture or Scripture is bent to suit an

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 87. To solve this problem, young earth creationists postulated that God created pre-encoded starlight; a speculation every bit as extreme as those proposed by evolutionists.

<sup>81</sup> Job 9:8, Psalm 104:2, Isaiah 40:22, Zechariah 12:1

<sup>82</sup> Riley, *Antievolution Pamphlets*, 14.

<sup>83</sup> Genesis 1:8 (NIV)

<sup>84</sup> Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1964), 204.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 206-7. Romans 5:12

<sup>86</sup> Genesis 1:3. The effect of light reaching the earth's surface resulted in morning and evening, the first 24 hour day, as observed from the perspective of the earth's surface.

<sup>87</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 289-290.

interpretation of science.”<sup>88</sup> Since the Bible and science must be compatible as God’s two books, there must be another alternative. Gray’s solution to the age and form of the universe was so simple that it was breathtaking and highlighted the problem both sides had in becoming entrenched in their beliefs and traditions. As the Big Bang intimated and the Bible revealed, God created out of nothing a fully functioning universe in Genesis 1:1. This universe consisted of the starry host that God alone stretched out. This included the planets of our solar system, including the earth’s core,<sup>89</sup> which were revolving in their orbits around the sun. The earth was in darkness, “deserted and empty,” and covered in water.<sup>90</sup> The darkness was not throughout the universe, but only on the earth’s surface as a result of the thick clouds that surrounded the planet.<sup>91</sup> “And the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”<sup>92</sup> It was at this juncture that Gray realized that the Bible did not specify how long the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters. The biblical record, therefore, allowed for an old universe. “If we leave the age of the universe undefined, answers appear for all of the problems,” Gray declared. “There is time for angels, the fall of Satan, the speed of light, radioisotope ratios and more.”<sup>93</sup>

It was only after the Spirit of God was done hovering that God said, “Let there be light.”<sup>94</sup> Rimmer explained:

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<sup>88</sup> Gray, *Age of the Universe*, 31.

<sup>89</sup> The earth’s core as described in Genesis 1:2 and Job 38:4-9 is repeatedly referred to in the Bible as the “foundation of the earth” in Isaiah 48:13, John 17:24, Ephesians 1:4, Hebrews 1:10, 1 Peter 1:20.

<sup>90</sup> Genesis 1:2. The Hebrew phrase “tohu wabohu” is better translated “deserted and empty” in Gray, *Age of the Universe*, 29. While “tohu” may mean chaotic, context dictates its meaning. By subtracting the six days of Genesis 1:3ff, one is left with the contextual description of “tohu wabohu” in Genesis 1:2; the earth’s core surrounded in water and darkness – a barren and empty planet.

<sup>91</sup> Job 38:4-9

<sup>92</sup> Genesis 1:2 (NIV)

<sup>93</sup> Gray, *Age of the Universe*, 89.

<sup>94</sup> Genesis 1:3

Light illumined the planet on the first day of creation. The second day was given up to the establishment of the laws of meteorology that guide and direct what we call weather. On the third day three mighty works were wrought. The oceans were gathered together into their one bed, the vast realm of botany was born, and the world of biology came into being. Up to this time, the light that had been shining on the planet had been filtered through that aqueous envelope which had not been dissipated. Then on the fourth day, the atmosphere cleared so that the direct rays of the sun reached the planet with all the brightness characteristic of our modern daylight.<sup>95</sup>

We might add, for the very first time. Without light on the earth, there could be no day or night. Thus, the first day from the perspective of the earth began when God called for light,<sup>96</sup> though an unspecified period of time, perhaps billions of years, could have already elapsed in the universe. The six days of creation, therefore, did not consist of the creation of the universe, but rather the fashioning of the earth's biosphere, forming it and filling it, in order to make it habitable for man! The prophet Isaiah said it perfectly, "He who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited."<sup>97</sup>

Gray's interpretation was profound in its simplicity and also solved the old earth/young earth controversy. The earth could be both old and young! The earth's

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<sup>95</sup> Rimmer, *Harmony*, 102-103. See also Genesis 1:14-19 in Robert Jamieson, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*, Genesis-Esther, vol. 1, (Hartford, CT: Scranton, 1887).

<sup>96</sup> The text does not say God created light on day one, only that he called for it in Genesis 1:3-5.

<sup>97</sup> Isaiah 45:18 (NIV). "He who created (bara) the heavens" is a reference to Genesis 1:1; "he who fashioned (yasar) and made (asa) the earth" is a reference to God fashioning it in Genesis 1:3ff.; "he did not create (bara) it to be empty (tohu)" is a reference to the original creation of the earth's core in Genesis 1:1 indicating that a deserted earth was not God's final purpose for the planet; "but formed (yasar) it to be inhabited (loshebet)" is a reference to God making the earth a dwelling for life in Genesis 1:3ff. "Bara" and "asa" are not interchangeable as Leupold mistakenly argued by comparing Genesis 1:21 with 1:25 in *Exposition of Genesis*, 61. They have an entirely different semantic range of meaning which is obvious when one understands "asa" to mean "do, fashion, accomplish." "The word bara carries the thought of the initiation of the object involved. It always connotes what only God can do and frequently emphasizes the absolute newness of the object created. The word asa is much broader in scope, connoting primarily the fashioning of the object with little concern for special nuances" in *TWOT*, #1708. It is only in the context of God creating that "asa" can be understood to mean that God "did" something or "made" something. When God created (bara) the living creatures, birds, animals and man, he accomplished (asa) what he intended to do by forming them after their kinds.

foundation described in Genesis 1:1 may be very old as geologists claim, but the earth's biosphere fashioned in six literal 24 hour days as recorded in Genesis 1:3-31 may be quite recent as the flood genealogy indicates. That these concepts were once taught by fundamentalists before the reaction to evolution settled in and buried these ideas in an avalanche of rhetoric ought to be encouraging to anyone who cares about a literal interpretation of the Bible. "Because the age-of-the-universe issue is the primary force leading to the rejection of biblical literalism, the correction of this error will neutralize that destructive tool," Gray predicted. Unfortunately, Gray was wrong. Young earth creationists continued to denounce anyone who did not affirm a six day creation of the entire universe,<sup>98</sup> misapplying Exodus 20:11, which refers only to the "sky," "land" and "sea," and all that is in "them" of days two through six,<sup>99</sup> and not to the initial creation of the universe which took place before the first day.<sup>100</sup> Old earth advocates continued to speak of days as long periods of time.<sup>101</sup> And evolutionists continued to deny the supernatural work of God.

There can be no excuse for proponents of an "inspired" Bible to ignore Gray's thesis.<sup>102</sup> Modernists, on the other hand, had a built in excuse. They had changed their

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<sup>98</sup> Dan Batten, "Soft Gap Sophistry," [www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v26/i3/softgap.asp](http://www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v26/i3/softgap.asp).

<sup>99</sup> Gray, *Age of the Universe*, 23. Genesis 1:6-31 (NIV). See Gray's defense of his interpretation of Exodus 20:11 in response to Frank DeRemer's critique that "'Heavens' (v. 1) should refer to space, not stars, and 'earth' should refer not to our planet but to the universal water out of which God later crafted every material thing" in [ageoftheuniverse.com/response\\_tj.htm](http://ageoftheuniverse.com/response_tj.htm). Young earth creationists seek to discredit Gray's thesis on the basis of Exodus 20:11, alleging that this passage teaches the creation of the entire universe in six days and not just the earth's biosphere.

<sup>100</sup> Genesis 1:1-2. The first day did not begin until God said, "Let there be light" in Genesis 1:3.

<sup>101</sup> There is no record of old earth creationists, such as Hugh Ross, interacting with Gray's thesis.

<sup>102</sup> "Young – and Old – Earth Creationists: Can we even talk together?" [sonlight.com/young\\_or\\_old\\_earth.html](http://sonlight.com/young_or_old_earth.html). For a list of scholars, such as R. K. Harrison, James Oliver Buswell, J. Barton Payne, John Peter Lange, Samuel J. Schultz, and Charles Hodge, that support various aspects of Gray's thesis, see [ageoftheuniverse.com/scholars.htm](http://ageoftheuniverse.com/scholars.htm).

reference point from the supernatural to the natural.<sup>103</sup> Nature had become their highest authority. But not the nature of the Bible that revealed God, but the materialistic kind that excluded God.<sup>104</sup> Since they started from an assumption that science studied only the natural and is our only reliable path to knowledge, God, "who can never do anything that makes a difference, and of whom we can have no reliable knowledge, is of no importance to us."<sup>105</sup> William Provine, professor of biological sciences at Cornell University, insisted "that the conflict between science and religion is inescapable, to the extent that persons who manage to retain religious beliefs while accepting evolutionary biology 'have to check [their] brains at the church-house door.'"<sup>106</sup>

This same denial of the compatibility of science and the Bible took place recently at Baylor University, an institution connected historically with the Southern Baptist Convention. The faculty of the school reacted vehemently and forcefully against President Robert Sloan's attempt to turn Baylor into a world-class research university while also strengthening its Christian identity. Former president, Herbert Reynolds, claimed "that 'fundamentalists' [had] taken over the university." He asserted that he held to the "two-spheres" approach, in which faith had nothing to do with the "pursuit of objective knowledge."<sup>107</sup> When Sloan hired William Dembski, author of *The Design Inference* with doctorates in philosophy and mathematics, to head up a new research center to test the theory of intelligent design as a component of Baylor's Institute of Faith and Learning, the faculty senate voted 27-2 to shut it down. Despite a positive report by an outside

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<sup>103</sup> Marsden, *Soul*, 213.

<sup>104</sup> Romans 1:20-25

<sup>105</sup> Phillip E. Johnson, *Darwin on Trial* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 115.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 124, quoting Provine, "Evolution and the Foundation of Ethics," *MBL Science* 3, no. 1: 25-29.

<sup>107</sup> Gene Edward Veith, "Baptist Brawl," *World*, 14 February 2004, 29.

review committee that Dembski's work was legitimate and had a rightful place at the university, Sloan was forced to ask for Dembski's resignation due to the incessant embarrassment "creationism" was causing the university's science departments within the academic community. One thing was certain, Baylor was not willing to lead the way in opening up "science" to the concept of "a designer," a view that "challenges our entire worldview."<sup>108</sup> Just the whiff of the idea that the Bible and science might be compatible brought the project to a screeching halt. There could be no room for "design" that hinted of a supernatural designer on the campus of Baylor University, not even in the Institute of Faith and Learning, if it was linked in any way to "science."<sup>109</sup>

It was in reaction to this type of bias concerning the supernatural origins of the Bible that prompted Paley to ask in 1824, "Why should we question the genuineness of these books? Is it for that they contain accounts of the supernatural?" Paley knew that if they had recorded ordinary history they would have been accepted just like "Josephus or Philo."<sup>110</sup> By denying the two books of God, philosophical naturalists were distorting what could be known about reality and the universe. By suppressing the truth concerning the compatibility of the Bible and science, and denying the philosophical nature of scientific materialism, modernists, who had abandoned the authority of the Bible, were primed to march head long into the camp of the humanists.

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<sup>108</sup> Lauren Kern, "In God's Country," *Houston Press*, 14 December 2000, and "Monkey Business," *Dallas Observer*, 11 January 2001, compiled in <http://texscience.org/files/dembski-baylor.html>.

<sup>109</sup> Blair Martin, "BU Science-Religion Center Draws Critics," *Baylor Lariat*, 6 April 2000, [www3.baylor.edu/Lariat/Archives/2000/20000406/art-front01.html](http://www3.baylor.edu/Lariat/Archives/2000/20000406/art-front01.html).

<sup>110</sup> Paley, *Evidences*, 110-111.

## FIVE

### THE FAITH OF HUMANISM

Fundamentalism is skeptical of science; Modernism merely flirts with science; but  
Humanism says that while science may give us inadequate knowledge,  
it gives us all we have and we must make the most of it.<sup>1</sup>

– Curtis W. Reese

The logical extension of modernism was full-fledged humanism. While modernists were still trying to distill the essence of the Bible into abiding principles, humanists were abandoning the Bible altogether. Curtis W. Reese, a leading spokesperson and signer of the *Humanist Manifesto*, argued that "dependence" on "Reason" was "as fallacious as dependence on the 'Bible' or the 'Pope.'" Humanism was not "rational" but "experimental."<sup>2</sup> There was no infallible, authoritative source; certainly not the Bible, nor the God of the Bible. "If modernism had made God immanent, so the argument ran, humanism made him completely immanent. God became the world, man, and his dreams; religion became human experience."<sup>3</sup> As such, "worship" became "the reverential attitude towards all that is wonderful in persons and throughout all of life;

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis W. Reese, "The Faith of Humanism," *The Open Court* XLI (May 1927): 270-277, compiled in Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., ed., *Controversy in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Evolution* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), 44.

<sup>2</sup> Curtis W. Reese, ed., *Humanist Sermons* (Chicago: Open Court, 1927), vii.

<sup>3</sup> Gatewood, Jr., ed., *Controversy in the Twenties*, 44.



a wistful, hopeful, expectant attitude of mind; not abject homage to either 'Humanity' or 'God,'" stated Reese. At the core of humanism<sup>4</sup> was an "organic" view of life that placed "human inquiry" and "human responsibility" at the forefront of religion in contrast to the "mechanistic and materialistic view of life" inherent in "Materialism."<sup>5</sup>

### **Falling Away**

In rejecting rationalism and elevating experience, humanism stepped outside of fundamentalism and beyond modernism. While fundamentalists clung to the authority of the inerrant Bible as God's perfect revelation to man, and modernists embraced the authority of the scientific method which assisted them in deciphering the inspired human Bible, humanists looked within "human nature" to find their authority. What they found was indeed human!<sup>6</sup> No longer would man be "treated as a means to the glory of God." Man would become "an end in and of himself." "Philosophical Humanism puts human nature at the center of the knowledge process and defines values in terms of the relation of things to human living," explained Reese, "thus contrasting sharply with super-human, supernatural, and absolutistic value-schemes."<sup>7</sup>

The break with fundamentalism was clean and clear for all to see. E. Burdette Backus envisioned a new universal religion that did not require a belief in God.<sup>8</sup> John H. Dietrich affirmed, "Humanism does not recognize the existence of any supernatural. It adopts a purely naturalistic conception of the universe. That is, it does not believe that

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<sup>4</sup> While this form of humanism has some similarities with the religious humanism of the Renaissance, particularly in its elevation and optimism of human nature, it differed radically in its disavowal of God.

<sup>5</sup> Reese, *Humanist Sermons*, vii, vi, xii, xv, vi.

<sup>6</sup> It could be argued that what they had discovered was not human but Satanic by referencing Isaiah 14:12-14 and James 3:15. Their non-spiritual or material (psookheekos) wisdom was of the devil.

<sup>7</sup> Reese, *Humanist Sermons*, ix, viii, vi.

<sup>8</sup> E. Burdett Backus, "Christianity and Humanism," in *Humanist Sermons*, 73-74.

there is any personal being outside of this universe who controls and governs it, and who may do so in violation of natural law." In removing God, Dietrich elevated man to the place of "supreme worth." "We see man as the highest product of the creative process," he espoused. "We know nothing above or beyond him, the highest things of which we can dream are but the products of his own mind, and so the supreme object of our allegiance is human life."<sup>9</sup> E. Stanton Hodgkin asserted, "Man must be just, loving, affectionate and merciful for the very reason that justice, love, mercy and affection are found operating nowhere else save in the human heart." Hodgkin unmercifully portrayed the "god" of the Old Testament as "capricious, cruel, intolerant, revengeful and self-centered." The "god" of the New Testament, which he accurately described as a "just, loving, compassionate and forgiving father" who is "all wise and all powerful," he berated as being unable or unwilling to intervene when "invoked in the hour of our greatest need." Therefore, Hodgkin deduced, "Man must be god to those to whom he is responsible, as far as in his power lies, for in no other way than through man can god function in these human terms of love, sympathy and justice in the world."<sup>10</sup>

John Haynes Holmes rejected orthodox Christianity in its entirety. "The earth was not made as stated in the Scriptures; man was not created arbitrarily by the hand of God, and placed innocent and blameless in the world; man did not fall from an original state of grace," he professed, "but on the contrary has risen out of the dust, out of the realm of

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<sup>9</sup> John H. Dietrich, "Unitarianism and Humanism," in *Humanist Sermons*, 97, 104. The Bible described Dietrich's position in 1 Corinthians 2:14 (NASB, updated edition): "a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God," where "psookheekos" refers to that which is physical or material, i.e. a natural man or materialist. By excluding "spiritual" things, a materialist is unable to "understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."

<sup>10</sup> E. Stanton Hodgkin, "Theism and Humanism," in *Humanist Sermons*, 56, 51, 52, 56.

animal existence, by a process of evolution more marvelous than anything narrated in Holy Writ.” He continued, “As for the Son of God and his atonement, it is all a myth as patent as the quest of Theseus or the labors of Hercules.”<sup>11</sup>

This full frontal attack against biblical Christianity was welcomed by the fundamentalists. If there was one thing the fundamentalists hated, it was the back-handed denial of biblical truth under the banner of “Christianity.” William Bell Riley, after articulating the fundamentals of the faith for *Current History* in 1927, stated:

Fundamentalism insists upon the plain intent of scripture-speech. The members of this movement have no sympathy whatever for that weasel method of sucking the meaning out of words and then presenting empty shells in an attempt to palm them off as giving the Christian faith a new and another interpretation. . . . When one is permitted to discard established and scientific definitions and to create at will his own glossary, language fails to be any longer a vehicle of thought, and inspiration itself may mean anything or nothing, according to the preference of its employer.<sup>12</sup>

John Roach Straton, referring to his debates with the Unitarian Charles Francis Potter who would later sign the Humanist Manifesto, proffered respect. “I am really glad to debate with Mr. Potter because he is an out-and-out Modernist, who is not afraid to show his colors and who does not, like the Modernists within the orthodox ranks, resort to verbal ambiguities and the use of religious language with double meaning,” wrote Straton. “He calls a spade a spade, and is honest in his beliefs, or, perhaps I should say, his unbeliefs.” Straton continued, “I have no respect for the radicals in the Protestant denomination who insist on staying inside and tearing down the faith of the church while they still eat the bread of the church.” He concluded, “I, therefore, though pained by his

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<sup>11</sup> John Haynes Holmes, “Religion: A Survey and Forecast,” in *Humanist Sermons*, 10.

<sup>12</sup> William Bell Riley, “The Faith of the Fundamentalists,” *Current History* XXVI (June 1927): 434-436, compiled in Gatewood, Jr., ed., *Controversy in the Twenties*, 75-75.

views, nevertheless respect Mr. Potter because when he lost his faith in Baptist and evangelical views of religion he left the Baptist church and joined the Unitarians.”<sup>13</sup>

### **Coming Out**

Fundamentalists were outraged when liberals attempted to hide their views from the laypersons in the churches. Henry Clay Morrison, president of Asbury College in 1924, railed, “The destructive critics and this whole brood of false teachers use shrewd and deceptive methods. They do not come bravely into the open with their declarations; they dare not.”<sup>14</sup> But now it appeared that humanism would force modernism’s hand! Christianity “has a perfectly definite interpretation of life upon the planet,” insisted Holmes. “It tells how man began; it presents the stupendous drama of his fall and condemnation; it portrays the miracle of Christ, the Son of God, come down to earth, to suffer and thus atone for mankind; it reveals the wonder of redemption, and its eternal rewards in the life beyond the grave,” Holmes summarized. “But science knows nothing of all this; it writes the story of the race, from the earliest beginnings even until now, and says nothing about these events. Nay, more than this – it positively disproves the reality of the Christian narrative.”<sup>15</sup>

A. Wakefield Slaten, pastor of the West Side Unitarian Church, drove the wedge even deeper. Calling modernism a “half-way house on the road to religious freedom,”

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<sup>13</sup> John Roach Straton and Charles Francis Potter, *The Battle over the Bible: First in the Series of Fundamentalist-Modernist Debates* (New York: Doran, 1924), vi-vii. Potter was not beyond obscuring his true views. In a sermon given at Dayton during the Scopes trial, Potter gave his four points of belief as: “I believe in Jesus, in the Bible, in God, and in Man.” The text of his sermon revealed that he was not applying the orthodox meanings to these concepts in Charles Francis Potter, “A Unitarian in Dayton, Tennessee,” *The Christian Register* (July 30, 1925), 5.

<sup>14</sup> Henry Clay Morrison, *Crossing the Deadline or the Recrucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ* (Louisville, KY: Pentecostal, 1924), 8-15, compiled in Gatewood, Jr., ed., *Controversy in the Twenties*, 235.

<sup>15</sup> Holmes, “A Survey and Forecast,” in *Humanist Sermons*, 9.

Slaten maintained that “bold and venturesome minds will not be content to tarry there.” He argued that it was intellectually dishonest to remain a modernist. “Nor is Modernism Christianity,” he admonished. “Those sturdy Fundamentalist defenders of the faith once delivered to the saints who make this assertion are correct.” He observed:

Though Modernists protest their loyalty to Christianity and persuade themselves that they are only serving up an old dish in a more palatable way; though they believe that they have thrown away the husk to keep the kernel; though they think they have preserved the essential truth while discarding the old thought framework, this is merely a comforting illusion. The reluctance with which men give up the name Christian is highly significant. Not until ingenuity is exhausted and intellectual honesty has nowhere to lay its head, will a man admit he is not a Christian.

“To be a Christian,” Slaten preached, “is to accept a certain historic scheme of thought as true. He who interprets the historic claim of that religion in a figurative and spiritualizing way has ceased to be a Christian.” Slaten’s whole point was that to be a consistent modernist one needed to become a humanist. The progression was obvious. Adopt materialism, evolution, and higher criticism of the Bible, and Christianity of any kind ceases to exist. The only honest thing left to do was to admit that you were no longer a Christian and withdraw from the denominations. “And why should the Modernist not admit that he is not a Christian?” Slaten questioned. “There is nothing reprehensible in not being a Christian,” he confessed. “It is difficult to see how any thinking man or woman at present could for a moment consider being a Christian if it were not the fashion among us, and convention did not demand it.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> A. Wakefield Slaten, “Modernism and Humanism,” in *Humanist Sermons*, 89, 87, 88. The secular press at the end of 1923 supported the fundamentalists’ contention that modernists ought to withdraw from the denominations. See George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 175, citing *The Nation* (December 26, 1923): 729, and *The New Republic* XXXVII (January 9, 1924): 161-162.

The attack on modernism continued with a speech in 1928 by Harry Elmer Barnes to the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In his address, Barnes offered nine counterpoints to Riley's nine points of fundamentalism, in the process rendering Christianity irrelevant and refashioning religion along purely secular lines.

1. That the question of a new conception of God is of vital social significance, because upon it hinges our whole philosophy of the good life and our attitude toward a multitude of social and cultural issues.
2. That the biblical God, Yahweh of the Hebrews, has been thoroughly undermined and discredited by the progress of natural science, biblical scholarship, and cultural history.
3. That the conventional orthodox view of Jesus Christ as the literal "only begotten son of God" and a peerless and unique religious teacher is undermined as certainly and completely by the state of contemporary knowledge as is the Hebrew God Yahweh.
4. That the task of constructing, in the disciplined human imagination, a conception of God compatible with the framework and perspective of modern knowledge is so difficult and baffling as to be, for practical purposes, futile.
5. That any conception of God compatible with modern knowledge would be so vague and indefinite as to be of no direct utility with reference to a personal religion for man here on earth.
6. That we must surrender any belief in literal immortality, whether physical or spiritual.
7. That the basic categories of the old theology relative to spiritual entities – the soul, sin, and the like – must be surrendered and replaced by determinate secular concepts.
8. That the cause of modernism will be unnecessarily damaged, if not, indeed, fatally discredited, by clinging to vulnerable and untenable vestiges of the old theology.
9. That religion is probably essential in any complete scheme of social idealism and social control; but in order to possess any validity and permanence in the present order, it must rest upon a thoroughly secular basis and found its attitudes

and policies upon the discoveries of the natural and social sciences and aesthetics.<sup>17</sup>

Barnes' was slightly ahead of his time in ridding religion of the supernatural and applying his faith to society. In his discourse, besides attacking Christianity and modernism, he attacked the "strict divorce laws" which "degrade the institution of marriage and rob hundreds of thousands of families of freedom, sentiment, and independence." Clearly Christianity was getting in the way of "the good life." In rebuking modernism, Barnes stated, "The modernist cannot logically taunt Mr. Bryan or Dr. Straton for their views on Yahweh and then himself cling to the conventional view that Jesus was unique as a religious and moral teacher." He correctly assessed, "Yahweh and Jesus are a theological couplet and a cultural complex that stand or fall together." And fall they must, if secular religion was to obtain the role of aiding "science in the social application" of "natural and social" scientific facts.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Modernist Meltdown**

When Barnes stated that Jesus "was an uneducated man who lived a very simple and restricted life in a backward and provincial economy two thousand years ago" and was therefore "in no sense prepared to give out competent opinions to guide mankind in the twentieth century,"<sup>19</sup> he had gone too far too quickly. With his "forthright declaration of humanism without the paraphernalia of Christian theological terminology," Barnes' exposed modernism for what it was – a materialistic worldview that was not dependent

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<sup>17</sup> Harry Elmer Barnes, "The Passing of Supernaturalism," *The Forum* LXXI (April 1929): 204-210, in Gatewood, Jr., ed., *Controversy in the Twenties*, 101-102.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 104, 106, 109-110.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

upon Christianity. For this reason, he was "severely arraigned by scientists and modernist theologians."<sup>20</sup>

Modernists had deceived themselves into thinking that they were "evangelical Christians." Shailer Mathews argued that "his religious starting point [was] inherited orthodoxy of a continuing community of Christians." He maintained that modernists accepted "Jesus Christ as the revelation of a Savior God." But in applying his brand of Christianity to life, he conceded that "it must be studied and applied according to methods judged effective by those to whom it is recommended." What were those methods? They were the methods of "modern science,"<sup>21</sup> a method undergirded by the premise that "ideas and beliefs are not mirrors of external reality but products of the mind shaped by natural evolutionary and cultural developments."<sup>22</sup> Religion, revealed the humanists, was "an invention of man."<sup>23</sup> "Where does religion come from in a natural world?" questioned Holmes. "What is the greatest truth about religion today? It is the truth that religion springs direct from the heart of man."<sup>24</sup> "Even the non-humanistic theory of supernatural revelation," stated Reese, "is itself the product of the human mind."<sup>25</sup> The modernists were busted.

If this was the case, who would need religion at all? H. L. Mencken and Bertrand Russell, noted atheists and skeptics, were right to scoff. "What survives under the name of Christianity, above the stratum of that mob, is no more than a sort of Humanism, with

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<sup>20</sup> Gatewood, Jr., ed., *Controversy in the Twenties*, 44.

<sup>21</sup> Shailer Mathews, *The Faith of Modernism* (New York: Macmillan, 1924), 23, 28-36, compiled in Gatewood, Jr., ed., *Controversy in the Twenties*, 59, 55.

<sup>22</sup> Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 176.

<sup>23</sup> *Humanist Manifestos I and II*, ed. Paul Kurtz (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1973), 7.

<sup>24</sup> Holmes, "A Survey and Forecast," in *Humanist Sermons*, 16.

<sup>25</sup> Reese, *Humanist Sermons*, xii.



little more supernaturalism in it than you will find in mathematics or political economy,” Mencken observed. “Civilized man has become his own god.”<sup>26</sup> Bertrand Russell added, “I say quite deliberately that the Christian religion, as organized in its churches, has been and still is the principal enemy of moral progress in the world.” But “science can help us get over this craven fear in which mankind has lived for so many generations,” he noted. “Science can teach us, and I think our hearts can teach us, no longer to look around for imaginary supports, no longer to invent allies in the sky, but rather to look to our own efforts here below to make this world a fit place to live in.”<sup>27</sup> Man, according to Russell, did not need God, but if you must believe in “something which cannot be rationally defended, it makes no difference what that something is.”<sup>28</sup>

What was not rational, however, were Russell’s views on the “good life.” Russell, in agreement with the materialists, “used the laws of physics to show, or attempt to show, that the movements of human bodies are mechanically determined, and that consequently everything that we say and every change of position that we effect fall outside the sphere of any possible free will.” Man simply was not responsible for his actions. The logical conclusion was that morality did not exist in a purely materialistic world. But Russell then turned around and advocated the “good life” – “one inspired by love and knowledge,” “kindliness” and “courage.”<sup>29</sup> Where did Russell get these ideas in an amoral world? Love, goodness, kindness and courage are concepts that are moral, immaterial and

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<sup>26</sup> H. L. Mencken, *Treatise on the Gods* (New York: Knopf, 1930), 297.

<sup>27</sup> Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian: And other Essays on Religion and Related Subjects*, edited, with an appendix on the “Bertrand Russell Case” by Paul Edwards (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1957), 21, 22.

<sup>28</sup> Bertrand Russell, *Bertrand Russell on God and Religion*, ed. Al Seckel (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1986), 283.

<sup>29</sup> Russell, *Why I am Not a Christian*, 56, 37-38, 56, 22.

spiritual. Russell in rejecting God could lay no claim to these attributes. He recoiled from any mention of “religion,”<sup>30</sup> but he adopted these qualities anyway, unable to live without them in the cold, brutish world of materialism.

Mencken simply avoided such concepts as “right and wrong, good and evil, moral and immoral, sin and virtue.” “I avoid that labor because it appears to be useless,” he stated. In building his ethical foundation, he saw “no necessary connection between religion and ethics.” For Mencken, ethics must be built on “what mere man is able to do, and in fact does” and not on “the mandates of the Most High, who knoweth all things and cannot err.” Borrowing from Darwin, Mencken found the origin of morality in the “instincts” of the “lower animals.” “The way to account for ethical ideas,” he mused, “is by the device of laying them to the inherent nature of man.”<sup>31</sup>

This was the sole purpose of humanism – to make the materialistic world a more pleasant place to live. “Science seems to freeze the heart to ice and wither the soul like grass in the hot sun,” wrote Earl F. Cook in *Humanist Sermons*. “And when one first realizes what the scientific view means, when one first becomes conscious of this brute power against which we futilely struggle with no chance of ultimate victory, then the thrill of life departs and existence seems worthless.” Cook was admitting the nihilistic implications of materialism. The only solution was to invent meaning. Mencken and Russell did not want to admit that the need for meaning in life was essentially a spiritual

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<sup>30</sup> It is interesting to note that neither Russell nor Mencken signed the Humanist Manifesto. As atheists, they had no need for God or religion. Since religion was perceived to be an invention of man, they could take it or leave it. They chose to leave it.

<sup>31</sup> H. L. Mencken, *Treatise on Right and Wrong* (New York: Octagon Books, 1977 [c1934]), vi, v, viii, 3, 9. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man: and Selection in Relation to Sex*, 2d ed., rev. and aug. (New York: Burt, [1874], 89.

quest, but that is what it was. Cook exclaimed, "It is part of religion and true humanhood to turn from vain regrets. It is part of religion to stay and to conquer, not to flee from our gravest and sorest troubles." He counseled, "This is no easy task, and if man would be man and not a traitor to human divineness there is no other road out of the sombre wilderness of science."<sup>32</sup>

### **A New Religion**

Since modernism and materialism led inevitably to nihilism, and since the methods of science had already debunked supernatural Christianity, it was left to man to rescue himself from the abyss of despair. To this end, 34 liberal humanists set about constructing a new religion in 1933. Humanity simply could not live without moral constructs. This "quest for abiding values," which must be "an inseparable feature of human life," demanded that they "establish" a religion "shaped for the needs of this age."<sup>33</sup> They affirmed the following:

*First:* Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

*Second:* Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as the result of a continuous process.

*Third:* Holding an organic view of life, humanists find that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected.

*Fourth:* Humanism recognizes that man's religious culture and civilization, as clearly depicted by anthropology and history, are the product of a gradual development due to his interaction with his natural environment and with his social heritage. The individual born into a particular culture is largely molded to that culture.

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<sup>32</sup> Earl F. Cook, "The Universe of Humanism," in *Humanist Sermons*, 124, 125.

<sup>33</sup> *Humanist Manifestos*, ed. Kurtz, 7.

*Fifth:* Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values. . . . Religion must formulate its hopes and plans in the light of the scientific spirit and method.

*Sixth:* We are convinced that the time has passed for theism, deism, modernism, and the several varieties of "new thought."

*Seventh:* Religion consists of those actions, purposes, and experiences which are humanly significant. . . . It includes labor, art, science philosophy, love, friendship, recreation – all that is in its degree expressive of intelligently satisfying human living. This distinction between the sacred and the secular can no longer be maintained.

*Eighth:* Religious humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man's life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now. This is the explanation of the humanist's social passion.

*Ninth:* In place of the old attitudes involved in worship and prayer the humanist finds his religious emotions expressed in a heightened sense of personal life and in a cooperative effort to promote social well-being.

*Tenth:* It follows that there will be no uniquely religious emotions and attitudes of the kind hitherto associated with belief in the supernatural.

*Eleventh:* Man will learn to face the crises of life in terms of his knowledge of their naturalness and probability. Reasonable and manly attitudes will be fostered by education and supported by custom. We assume that humanism will take the path of social and mental hygiene and discourage sentimental and unreal hopes and wishful thinking.

*Twelfth:* Believing that religion must work increasingly for joy in living, religious humanists aim to foster the creative in man and to encourage achievements that add to the satisfactions of life.

*Thirteenth:* Religious humanism maintains that all associations and institutions exist for the fulfillment of human life. . . . Certainly religious institutions, their ritualistic forms, ecclesiastical methods, and communal activities must be reconstituted as rapidly as experience allows, in order to function effectively in the modern world.

*Fourteenth:* A socialized and cooperative economic order must be established to the end that the equitable distribution of the means of life be possible. . . . Humanists demand a shared life in a shared world.

*Fifteenth and last:* We assert that humanism will: (a) affirm life rather than deny it; (b) seek to elicit the possibilities of life, not flee from it; and (c) endeavor to establish the conditions of a satisfactory life for all, not merely for the few. By this positive *morale* and intention humanism will be guided, and from this perspective and alignment the techniques and efforts of humanism will flow.<sup>34</sup>

In their affirmation of religion they denied the following: that the universe was created and had a beginning; the image of God in man; the soul or spirit of man; the uniqueness of Christianity; moral absolutes; the need for God; the worship of God; the immortality of the soul; the need for traditional church attendance; a relationship with God; faith and miracles; legitimacy of existing churches; free market capitalism; and inequality of life. Without any help from the established church, traditional Christianity or God, humanists sought to affirm life instead of the culture of death that inevitably follows when God and moral absolutes are discarded for the dogma of Darwin.<sup>35</sup> However, forty years later, and despite the atrocities of Hitler's holocaust, the weight of their philosophical position would overcome any remaining vestiges of the Christian tradition that supports life. In *Humanist Manifesto II*, birth control, abortion, the right to die with dignity, euthanasia, and the right to suicide would all be affirmed.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 8-10.

<sup>35</sup> Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), ix, 160-1. "Those skeptical about the role Darwinism played in the rise of advocacy for involuntary euthanasia, infanticide, and abortion should consider several points. First, before the rise of Darwinism, there was no debate on these issues. . . . Second, the earliest advocates of involuntary euthanasia, infanticide and abortion in Germany were devoted to a Darwinian worldview. Third, Haeckel, the most famous Darwinist in Germany, promoted these ideas in some of his best-selling books, so these ideas reached a wide audience, especially among those receptive to Darwinism. Finally Haeckel and other Darwinists and eugenicists grounded their views on death and killing on their naturalistic interpretation of Darwinism." What was true in Germany was also true in America.

<sup>36</sup> *Humanist Manifestos*, 18-19.

## Moral Anarchy

With the dawn of Darwin, the immoral forces of materialism had been unleashed. In *Materialism and Christianity*, F. Wayland-Smith recorded the thoughts of President Schurmann of Cornell University at the turn of the twentieth century, "This is a generation which has no fear of God before its eyes; it fears no hell; it fears nothing but the criminal court, the penitentiary, and the scaffold."<sup>37</sup> When Nietzsche proclaimed the death of God in the 19th century he understood that the result would be "the destruction of all meaning and value in life."<sup>38</sup> God-centered morality would come to an end. Wayland-Smith explained, "If there is no God, no Devil, no hereafter, no system of rewards and punishments, if death ends all, then the sensible thing to do is to get as much enjoyment out of this life as possible, no matter how it may affect others." Survival of the fittest would become the rule of the land. "Without God, man is a savage at heart," Wayland-Smith stated. "His selfish instincts, freed from moral control, will lead him to prey on his fellows, respecting nothing."<sup>39</sup> The humanists were naive and overly "optimistic"<sup>40</sup> in thinking that "instincts" could control man or make him "feel" love for his fellow man.

In 1909, Harold Bolce shocked the public with his expose in *Cosmopolitan* concerning the conditions on the campuses of the public universities.

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<sup>37</sup> F. Wayland-Smith, *Materialism and Christianity* (Kenwood, NY: F. Wayland-Smith, 1906), 6.

<sup>38</sup> William Lane Craig and Edwin Curley with annotations by William Lane Craig, *The Craig-Curley Debate: The Existence of the Christian God* (5 February 1998) University of Michigan, [www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/craig-curley00.html](http://www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/craig-curley00.html).

<sup>39</sup> Wayland-Smith, *Materialism and Christianity*, 14, 15.

<sup>40</sup> Paul Kurtz and Edwin H. Wilson, *Humanist Manifesto II* (1973) preface, in [www.americanhumanist.org/about/manifesto2.html](http://www.americanhumanist.org/about/manifesto2.html). The events of the twentieth century has shown the inability of humanism to stem the tide of man's inhumanity to man. Instead of admitting to the bankruptcy of their beliefs, humanists continued to denounce orthodox Christianity and affirmed renewed "faith" in their "positive declaration for times of uncertainty."

In hundreds of class-rooms it is being taught daily that the Decalogue is no more sacred than a syllabus; that the home as an institution is doomed; that there are no absolute evils; that immorality is simply an act in contravention of society's accepted standards; that the democracy is a failure and the Declaration of Independence only spectacular rhetoric; that the change from one religion to another is like getting a new hat; that moral precepts are passing shibboleths; that conceptions of right and wrong are as unstable as styles of dress; . . . and that there can be and are holier alliances without the marriage bond than within it.<sup>41</sup>

James H. Leuba, professor of psychology at the Bryn Mawr University, confirmed Bolce's observations with "an extensive survey of religious belief among college students and professors" in 1916.<sup>42</sup> "The deepest impression left by these records," Leuba concluded, "is that . . . Christianity, as a system of belief, has utterly broken down."<sup>43</sup>

Even modernists became alarmed by the flagrant immorality and evil of the 1920s. "But it is a commentary on our low ideals of living that a whole race of neo-Darwinian sociologists has arisen to greet that original animal struggle for existence as the standard to which they can appeal in justifying man's inhumanity to man," Harry Emerson Fosdick observed. "This is the Darwinism which Christianity must fight – not the biological truth of evolution . . . but a philosophical materialism which conceives the world's elemental nature as brutal and bloodthirsty, with war for its basic standard and norm."<sup>44</sup> Nations, and individuals within those nations, were merely acting upon the doctrines of Darwin's materialism and Nietzsche's atheism. When Nietzsche said,

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<sup>41</sup> Harold Bolce, "Blasting at the Rock of Ages," *Cosmopolitan* 46 (May 1909): 665, quoted in George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 267.

<sup>42</sup> Edward Lawson, *Summer for the Gods: the Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 40.

<sup>43</sup> James H. Leuba, *The Belief in God and Immortality* (Boston: Sherman, French, 1916), 203, 213, 254, quoted in Lawson, *Summer for the Gods*, 40.

<sup>44</sup> Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Modern Use of the Bible* (New York: Macmillan, 1924), 247, 248.

“I regard Christianity as the most fatal and seductive lie that has ever existed,”<sup>45</sup> he openly sanctioned the practice of evil that comes from a depraved mind.<sup>46</sup>

Mathews was alarmed that the “distrust of spiritual values [had] given rise to pagan enjoyment of animal life.” “Morality is flouted by thousands in the name of freedom,” he denounced, “and in many a community the family has become a temporary mating – if indeed men and women in revolt against the pact and its ideals trouble themselves with marriage.” Concerned that “love is too often but a synonym for animal passion,” he groaned, “Men would rather be pagans than be Puritans.”<sup>47</sup> Ironically, Mathews could not perceive that it was his own abandonment of biblical orthodoxy that led to the conditions he was now bewailing. He was thankful “that throughout the world there were voices calling men to repentance and to God.” But to whose “God” and to what “repentance” were they being called? Mathews observed, “Humanity is not good enough. It must be transformed, regenerated. But if democracy and science alone are not sufficient where is the power for such a change? We confidently reply, in Christianity.”<sup>48</sup> But Mathews’ Christianity no longer had the authority or credibility to call anyone to repentance.

### **Too Little, Too Late**

On one side of the spectrum stood the humanists, who spoke in terms of religion but not in terms of God. On the others side, stood the fundamentalists, who continued to believe in the absolute authority of the Bible and the fundamentals of the faith. One side

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 247, quoting from *The Will to Power*, Vol. I, 163, Sec. 200.

<sup>46</sup> Romans 1:28-32

<sup>47</sup> Shailer Mathews, *The Faith of Modernism* (New York: AMS Press, 1969), 5-6.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 6, 9.



derived morality from experience, the other side from revelation. In the middle stood the modernists, with one foot planted in each camp. Out of this wasteland came the voice of a young minister from Detroit calling, “Repent!”

Reinhold Niebuhr, in an article for *Christian Century* in 1926, articulated the problems he saw with the religious landscape. “Humanism as well as religion has been engulfed in the naturalism of our day,” he wrote. “Our obsession with the physical sciences and with the physical world has enthroned the brute and blind forces of nature.” By merely equating God with nature, Niebuhr understood that modernism “had taken refuge in various kinds of pantheism.” “Pantheism is always destructive to moral values,” he explained. “To identify God with automatic processes is to destroy the God of conscience.” Despite the moral decay and corresponding despair, humanism attempted to instill hope and optimism in man’s ability to pursue the good life. Niebuhr observed, “There is little to choose between the despair to which pure naturalism tempts us when we survey the human scene and the easy optimism which most modern religion encourages.” His solution was to combine both under the concept of God, which materialism had discarded. “What we need is both the spirit of repentance and the spirit of hope,” Niebuhr offered, “which can be inspired only by a theism which knows how to discover sin by subjecting man to absolute standards and to save him from despair by its trust in absolute values.”<sup>49</sup> In contrast with “modern liberalism,”<sup>50</sup> Niebuhr sought to recover the fundamentalist’s concept of sin while retaining the humanistic principle of

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<sup>49</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, “Our Secularized Civilization,” *Christian Century* XLIII (April 22, 1926): 508-509, compiled in Gatewood, Jr., ed., *Controversy in the Twenties*, 97, 98, 99.

<sup>50</sup> “Modern liberalism . . . believes with Rousseau in the goodness of natural man; or with Adam Smith in the harmlessness of egotistical man; or with J. S. Mill and the utilitarians in the virtue of prudently selfish men” in Reinhold Niebuhr, *Reflections on the End of an Era* (New York: Scribner’s, 1934), 113.

man's innate goodness. He attempted to measure man against God's absolute standard without also adopting that standard's axiom of total depravity. "Religious individualism recognizes the roots of society's evils in the self, but it also knows that the impulse toward the ideal is a vital factor in life," he argued. "Being certain of the spirit it is not afraid to look upon the face of nature. Confident of the reality of the principle of love, and certain in its faith in God it is able contritely to recognize the reality of malignant power in the self and in the world."<sup>51</sup>

Niebuhr was right to react negatively to naturalism, but his solution was only an apparent return to orthodoxy. He observed that sin was in the world, and he understood the need for absolute standards, but he failed to return to the inerrancy and authority of the Scriptures inspired by God that produced these absolutes. Gleason L. Archer enunciated the consequences of this failure. "If this written revelation contains mistakes, then it can hardly fulfill its intended purpose: to convey to man in a reliable way the will of God for his salvation." The reason, Archer explained, is "because a demonstrated mistake in one part gives rise to the possibility that there may be mistakes in other parts of the Bible. If the Bible turns out to be a mixture of truth and error, then it becomes a book like any other,"<sup>52</sup> which would render it incapable of being an absolute standard. But this was Niebuhr's position. Calling the "revelation" of the Bible a myth, he also denied the pervasiveness of man's sinful condition; defined the "idea of grace and forgiveness of God" in "mythical" terms; spoke of God revealing "his holiness in terms of mercy" as the "mythos of Jesus;" called the "incarnation" and "two natures of Christ"

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>52</sup> Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1964), 22.

myths; and believed the “doctrines of orthodoxy” to have been “imagined or invented by man observing history.”<sup>53</sup> Therefore, Niebuhr’s “absolute standard” by which humanity was to be judged was not the authority of the Bible but rather his own judgment!

Edwin Curley, in his debate with William Lane Craig, summarized the problem succinctly. “I think those Christians who adopt a freer attitude toward scripture – and do not feel that their acceptance of Christianity commits them to predestination, or Hell, or original sin, or justification by faith, or exclusivism – those Christians have their hearts in the right place,” he opined. “But I also think their feet may be planted on the slippery slope to heresy, and that more conservative Christians, who would accord greater authority to scripture, have a clearer right to call themselves Christians,” he admitted. “How much of traditional Christianity can you reject and still be a Christian?”<sup>54</sup> That was the problem with neo-orthodoxy.<sup>55</sup> The ministers of the mainline churches sitting in judgment of the Bible were rejecting the historic orthodox position of biblical Christianity while continuing to call themselves Christians.<sup>56</sup> No longer able to preach “the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness,” by which the Apostle Paul meant the preaching of God’s authoritative “word” which leads to behavior that reflects the character of God,<sup>57</sup> they preached a man-centered message of repentance and hope in humanity that attempted to challenge societal norms and produce cultural change. The results were devastating. If the clergy could sit in judgment of the Scriptures, so could the laity. Christianity’s

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<sup>53</sup> Niebuhr, *Reflections*, 290, 287, 288, 213.

<sup>54</sup> Craig and Curley, *Debate*, [www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/craig-curley00.html](http://www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/craig-curley00.html).

<sup>55</sup> Neo-orthodoxy is a broad umbrella term for a host of theological presuppositions that included Niebuhr, Barth, Brunner, and others.

<sup>56</sup> Jeffrey K. Hadden, *The Gathering Storm in the Churches* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969), 39-63.

<sup>57</sup> Titus 1:1-3

restraining influence on moral behavior became irrelevant as everyone "did what was right in his own eyes."<sup>58</sup> Without recourse to absolute truth, the religious elites were powerless to stem the tide of man's moral decline. By undermining the authority of the Bible within their denominations, they contributed to the marginalization of biblical Christianity and the resulting carnage of death.

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<sup>58</sup> Without the authority of a king over Israel, "every man did what was right in his own eyes" in Judges 17:6 (NASB, updated edition). In the same way, without the authority of the Bible over humanity, everyone is free to do as he or she pleases. "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law" in Proverbs 29:18 (NIV).

## EPILOGUE

### TRUTH MATTERS

The man who today enters upon the Christian life is enlisting  
in a warfare against the whole current of the age.<sup>1</sup>

– J. Gresham Machen

In a commencement address at Hampden-Sydney College on June 9, 1929, the former professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary, J. Gresham Machen, addressed the critical issue of the day. "It seems to be so easy for religion to purchase peace by abandoning to science the whole sphere of facts, in order to retain for itself merely a sphere of feelings and ideals," he said. "You have your Christian experience, and let science and biblical criticism do what they will!"<sup>2</sup> But Machen knew that this was peace at a high price. The abandonment of supernatural revelation, both in nature and Scripture, would sever morality from the source of absolute truth. Without the two books of God, there would be nothing left to anchor morality. For Machen, this was a war worth fighting.

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<sup>1</sup> Marvin Olasky, "Commencement Courage," *World*, 7 May 2005, 52.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

George Barna quantified this connection in a recent survey. The research has shown that belief in the Bible “has a radical effect on a person’s life.”<sup>3</sup> Claiming that only 4% of adults have a biblical worldview, Barna defined this view as believing that “absolute moral truth” exists and that such truth is “based on the Bible.” In addition to having “made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is important in their life” and believing that “they will go to Heaven because they have confessed their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior,” individuals with a biblical world view also believe the following six statements:

1. God is the all-powerful, all-knowing, perfect Creator of the universe who rules the world today.
2. The Bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings.
3. You have a personal responsibility to tell other people your religious beliefs.
4. The devil/Satan is a living being, not just a symbol of evil.
5. A person who is generally good, or does enough good things for others during his or her life, cannot earn a place in Heaven.
6. While on earth, Jesus Christ did not commit sins.<sup>4</sup>

Those who held to the above beliefs were much less likely to gamble (27% vs. 61%), cohabitate (12% vs. 60%), indulge in sexual fantasies (15% vs. 59%), have an abortion (4% vs. 45%), commit adultery (7% vs. 42%), view pornography (5% vs. 38%), swear (7% vs. 36%), get drunk (8% vs. 35%), approve of homosexual sex (5% vs. 30%), or use non-prescription drugs (6% vs. 17%) in comparison to “all adults.” However, as one moves away from belief in the Bible’s authority, the acceptability of the ten behaviors

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<sup>3</sup> “A Biblical Worldview Has a Radical Effect on a Person’s Life,” *Barna Research Online*, 1 December 2003, [www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=154](http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=154).

<sup>4</sup> George Barna, *Think Like Jesus* (Nashville, TN: Integrity, 2003), 28-29.

risers. Those who claimed to be atheists or agnostics gave the highest stamp of approval to the behaviors examined.<sup>5</sup>

It is not surprising, therefore, that the abandonment of scriptural authority and the adoption of scientific naturalism grounded in Darwinism could lead to a devaluing of human life.<sup>6</sup> The seeds of hatred for the Jews, for example, were articulated by the atheist H. L. Mencken in 1930 on the basis of eugenics years before the Jewish holocaust. "The Jews could be put down very plausibly as the most unpleasant race ever heard of," he mused. "As commonly encountered, they lack many of the qualities that mark the civilized man: courage, dignity, incorruptibility, ease, confidence."<sup>7</sup> This attitude extended to any person who did not measure up to the standard of the eugenicists. Charles B. Davenport, of the Department of Genetics of the Carnegie Institute of Washington, decried the work of the churches that cared for the less fortunate. "Anybody who visits an institution for the feeble-minded and sees the hundreds of 'children' who are bedridden for life, who are paralyzed, incapable of speech, often with one or more senses defective or absent," he wrote, "and who are being fed and cared for as though they were infants through many years by effective, well-endowed attendants, must be impressed by society's failure to make use of one of the most valuable means that nature has provided for purifying the race." What was that means? Davenport continued, "It is rather

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<sup>5</sup> "Morality Continues to Decay," *Barna Research Online*, 3 November 2003, [www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PagePressRelease.asp?PressReleaseID=152&Reference=B](http://www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PagePressRelease.asp?PressReleaseID=152&Reference=B).

<sup>6</sup> Recent studies by Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 233, and Christine Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics: Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), have demonstrated a connection between Darwinism and eugenics, evolutionary ethics, and the German holocaust.

<sup>7</sup> H. L. Mencken, *Treatise on the Gods* (New York: Knopf, 1930), 345-46.

remarkable that normal society has made so little use of the death function to free itself of its acquired burdens of physical and mental defectives."<sup>8</sup>

The fundamentalists understood the scope of this threat to human life and biblical values and denounced it fiercely. Amzi Clarence Dixon laid the blame at the feet of "Nietzsche, the neurotic German philosopher," who "hypnotized the German mind with his pagan brute philosophy. 'The weak and botched,' said [Nietzsche], 'shall perish; first principle of humanity.'" Writing to an invalid woman, Nietzsche wrote, "'If what I publish be true, a feeble woman like you would have no right to exist.'"<sup>9</sup> Fundamentalists like Dixon, John Roach Straton, and William Bell Riley believed that the "evolutionary philosophy" of Darwinism "produced" the war of 1914.<sup>10</sup> "The greatest war in history, which has drenched the world with blood and covered it with human bones, can be traced to this source," declared Dixon. "If the strong and fit have the scientific right to destroy the weak and unfit that human progress may be promoted, then might is right, and Germany should not be criticized for acting upon this principle."<sup>11</sup> Riley astutely predicted that the worst was yet to come. "The doctrine of Charles Darwin, in proportion as it dominates the future, the biological theory of evolution to the extent of its final acceptance," proclaimed Riley, "will make the recent baptism of blood, brought on by Nietzsche and Trietschke under the domination of that biological theory, as compared

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<sup>8</sup> Charles B. Davenport, "Eugenics," compiled in Shailer Mathews, *Contributions of Science to Religion* (New York: Appleton, 1924), 297-98.

<sup>9</sup> Amzi Clarence Dixon, "The Root of Modern Evils" from the *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 31 December 1922, compiled in Willard B. Gatewood, Jr. Editor, *Controversy in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Evolution* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), 121.

<sup>10</sup> John Roach Straton and Charles Francis Potter, *Evolution Versus Creation: Second in the Series of Fundamentalist-Modernist Debates* (New York: Doran, 1924), 104.

<sup>11</sup> Dixon, "The Root of Modern Evils," 121.



with the baptism yet to come, as a local shower to the flood that will prevail over every mountain."<sup>12</sup>

The destruction of human life during the reign of Adolf Hitler is well-documented. What is just now coming to light is how closely connected social Darwinism was to Hitler's agenda. In the propaganda film *Victim of the Past* (1937), while showing a disfigured handicapped person, the narrator declared, "Everything in the natural world that is weak for life will ineluctably be destroyed. In the last few decades, mankind has sinned terribly against the law of natural selection. We haven't just maintained life unworthy of life, we have even allowed it to multiply. The descendants of these sick people look like this!"<sup>13</sup> The conclusion of one recent study was that "without Darwinism, especially in its social Darwinist and eugenics permutations, neither Hitler nor his Nazi followers would have had the necessary scientific underpinnings to convince themselves and their collaborators that one of the world's greatest atrocities was really morally praiseworthy."<sup>14</sup> It appears that the fundamentalists of the 1920s were right in their assessment of where Darwinism and scientific naturalism would lead.

Peter Singer, professor of philosophy at Princeton University, bemoans the fact that "in Germany since the defeat of Hitler it has not been possible openly to discuss the question of euthanasia, nor the issue of whether a human life may be so full of misery as not to be worth living." But that has not stopped him from pressing forward. Singer's

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<sup>12</sup> William Bell Riley, *The Antievolution Pamphlets of William Bell Riley*, edited with an introduction by William Vance Trollinger, Jr., vol. 4 of *Creationism in the Twentieth-Century America: A Ten-Volume Anthology of Documents, 1903-1961*, ed. Ronald L. Numbers (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), 188.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Burleigh, *Death and Deliverance: 'Euthanasia' in Germany 1900-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 189.

<sup>14</sup> Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler*, 233.

approach to ethics is a “conscious disavowal of any assumption that all members of our own species have, merely because they are members of our species, any distinctive worth or inherent value that puts them above members of other species.”<sup>15</sup> By adopting “Darwin’s discovery of our animal origins” as his basis for ethics, Singer has taken direct aim at the “story of our Divine Creation, made in the image of God with an immortal soul.”<sup>16</sup> Singer has once again brought the conflict between Scripture and scientific naturalism out into the open. After advocating the acceptability of killing a newborn within the first month of its life on the grounds that, though the child is human, it is not a “person,” Singer writes, “If these conclusions seem too shocking to take seriously, it may be worth remembering that our present absolute protection of the lives of infants is a distinctively Christian attitude rather than a universal ethical value.”<sup>17</sup> What is shocking is that little by little the utilitarian ethics of Peter Singer is gaining ground in American society as evidenced by the court ordered death of Terry Schiavo.<sup>18</sup>

In order to turn the tide back to moral sanity and the sanctity of human life, both books of God need to be reclaimed. The war between science and Scripture needs to end in favor of the supernatural. The book of Scripture, as the very Word of God, needs to be preached once again from the pulpits of America as the primary source from which universal ethical values are derived.<sup>19</sup> The book of Nature, as the creative work of God, needs to be embraced as a corollary witness to the “eternal power and divine nature” of

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<sup>15</sup> Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1993), ix.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 171-72.

<sup>18</sup> [www.terrisfight.org](http://www.terrisfight.org)

<sup>19</sup> 2 Peter 1:3-21

God.<sup>20</sup> Both books are supernatural works of God. Both speak the truth about the world in which we live. And both lead us to a knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness.

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<sup>20</sup> Romans 1:18-20 (NIV)

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